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SERMON NOTES

A SCHEME FOR A COURSE OF THREE YEARS ON THE CHIEF POINTS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

WITH SYNOPSES AND REFERENCES

BY

F. P. HICKEY, O.S.B.

AUTHOR OF "SHORT SERMONS" (TWO VOLUMES)

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WITH A PREFACE

BY THE

RIGHT REV. F. W. KEATING, D.D.

BISHOP OF NORTHAMPTON

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PREFACE

THE following pages, now offered to the clergy at large, originated in an endeavour to give effect in the Diocese of Northampton to the regulations on preaching laid down by the Holy See, especially in the Encyclical *Acerbo Nimis* of April 25, 1905.

The object aimed at was to put into the hands of priests a programme of Sunday discourses which should present in a systematic form the whole contents of Catholic belief and practice, and should harmonize, as far as possible, with the spirit of the liturgical seasons. A glance at the Table of Contents will show that this has been achieved.

A more difficult matter was to determine what was required to make the outline most helpful. One's own missionary experience yields painful evidence of the uselessness of a mere skeleton. How often such bare coverts have been drawn hopelessly blank! On the other hand, finished discourses, educative though they be, are too suggestive of ready-made clothing. An earnest pastor, who is in daily contact with his flock and

familiar with their spiritual needs and ailments, is thankful for what prompts ideas and stimulates emotion, but will handle the points most effectively in his own way.

Many such priests have expressed their appreciation of Dom Paulinus Hickey's "Short Sermons." His tenure of a chaplaincy in the diocese made it possible for me to invite him to carry through a work for which he is peculiarly fitted. I am confident that the clergy will find here practical assistance of great value in fulfilling the obligation laid upon them.

The prominence, by way of reference, given to Bishop Hedley's published sermons needs no justification. Few indeed are they who can command His Lordship's sublimity of thought and grace of diction. Yet none can afford to neglect the dogmatic groundwork which is his invariable method and the secret of his power. His enthralling appeals to heart and conscience owe little or nothing to the latest "sensation," or any transient vogue in the intellectual or religious world. He builds, as every Catholic preacher should, on "the more firm prophetical word"; on those unchangeable verities, which have always fashioned, and which alone can fashion, Christians in every age.

✠ F. W., Bishop of Northampton.

The books to which references are made in the following pages are:

By Right Rev. Bishop Hedley, O.S.B.—

A Bishop and His Flock.
A Retreat.
Our Divine Saviour.
The Christian Inheritance.
The Light of Life.

By Very Rev. Canon Howe—

The Catechist (two volumes).

By the Paulists—

Five Minutes' Sermons (Vol. I.).

By Rev. F. P. Hickey, O.S.B.

Short Sermons (two volumes)

OUTLINE OF PLAN

THE FIRST YEAR: GOD

Creator, Father, Redeemer. The Incarnation. Christ: His Coming, Sufferings, Resurrection, Doctrines, Holy Spirit, Holy Trinity. Christ in Holy Eucharist. His Sacraments. His teaching us to pray. His Beatitudes. Types of Himself. The Judge to Come.

THE SECOND YEAR: THE CHURCH

Divine. Bible. The Creed explained. The Commandments. The Sacraments.

THE THIRD YEAR: OURSELVES

Children of God and the Church. Our Souls. Grace. Theological Virtues. Our Duties. Our Helps. Our Enemies. Our Dangers. Our Hopes.

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THE FIRST YEAR

GOD

I. Advent.

GOD, OUR CREATOR AND OUR FATHER.

"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?"—*Mal.* ii. 10.

1. That there is a God is a truth fixed in every heart. The pleasures of life and sinfulness may obscure it; afflictions, the approach of death, etc., force us to remember Him.

2. God created us,—body and soul. The body with its senses and powers; the soul, immortal and destined for happiness and glory in the presence of its God.

3. As Creator, God must be interested in His work; but that other name, the first in the Creed and in the Lord's prayer, reveals Him to us as He is—"Our Father"—that He may win our love and confidence.

4. This thought stimulates us to "walk in His sight," trusting in His solicitude, providence and help. A father's duty and joy is to care for his child. And has not God said, "Can a woman forget her little child? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee" (Isa. xlix. 15).

"A Bishop and His Flock," i. and ii., 6-9. "A Retreat," 46.

II. Advent.

WHY DID GOD MAKE US?

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God."—*Matt.* vi. 33.

1. God made us that body and soul should be happy with Him for ever in heaven.

2. And in this short life we have to labour to attain to that, by

(*a*) Learning to *know* God. The Catechism and its explanation: the Gospel teaching from sermons, etc.

(*b*) Learning to *love* God, and God will teach us if we ask Him,—turning to Him, praying.

(*c*) Learning to *serve* God, by avoiding evil, keeping His commandments,—Mass, etc.

3. Heaven depends upon our doing these things—being instructed; loving Him: and being loyal to all that God has taught us.

"The Catechist," i. 3.

III. Advent.

MAN'S FREE WILL—THE FALL.

"And he would not."—*Matt.* xviii. 30.

1. If serving God had been compulsory, there could have been no merit.

2. Hence God gave man the independent power of Free Will. We can turn to God, or from God. We have the power of choosing or rejecting; meriting or sinning.

3. Example of our first parents; their disobedience, the fall.

4. Free Will disarranged all the loving providence of God. No heaven assured to men now, but labour and sin and death.

5. See in our own lives how God's goodness has been thwarted by our own wilfulness.

"Short Sermons," ii. 198.

IV. Advent.

NEED OF A REDEEMER.

"God Himself will come and save us."—*Isa.* xxxv. 4.

1. Fallen man helpless himself to attain the glory destined for him.

2. But not cast off for ever. A Saviour was promised and foretold;—and He came, not an angel or a prophet, but the Son of God Himself.

3. But why this mercy, if man had disobeyed and rebelled? Simply and completely through love: for our sakes.

4. And it is "plentiful Redemption" that He brought, for He came, and lived, and died, and stays with us still.

"Short Sermons," i. 13.

Sunday after Christmas.

THE INCARNATION.

"This day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord."—*Luke* ii. 11.

1. The great and adorable Mystery—God made Man !—yet how simply, lovingly the Gospel bids us come and "see the word which has come to pass. A sign unto you—the Infant," etc.

2. The contrast—sight and faith !

The picture of Bethlehem. "She brought forth her first-born Son and laid Him in a manger."

3. Faith bids us acknowledge that Infant as the blessed hope, the glory of the great God. "And the world knew Him not."

Faith tells us more—that His coming brought Redemption : and is not a mere memory, for He is with us still—our Altar is Bethlehem.

4. His abasement in coming thus should be welcomed with adoration and gratitude.

"Short Sermons," i. 17.

I. Epiphany.

THE INCARNATION REVEALS GOD TO US.

"See what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us."—1 *John* iii. 1.

1. The Incarnation enables us to see God. No inaccessible light conceals Him! He is a human being with a Mother,—a Name,—and a history that all the world knows.

2. God's love is now the thrilling of a human Heart, the Heart of Jesus Christ, Man and God: which seeks loyalty and love and gratitude from those It came to save.

3. And yet, human as He is, the Redeemer was nothing less than He had been from all eternity—the Infinite God!

4. He became Man that we might become "the sons of God."

"Our Divine Saviour," 311-314.

II. Epiphany.

THE INCARNATION DRAWS MEN TO GOD.

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."—*John* i. 4.

1. By reason of Christ's personality, He is known to us ;—His name, words, actions, miracles. He fills our minds and souls, so that we are constrained to worship and love Him.

2. But more still the lowliness of His coming attracts us. He shows that He wants us ; that He has come "to seek and to save." He, the God-Man, is waiting and seeking for our love.

3. And much more still,—God made Man suffers for us ! Who can resist such love ? Are we not drawn to Him ? ready to follow Him ? Can we not draw courage and resignation from the thought of His Sufferings ? And compassion for Him makes our worship and devotedness all the more intense.

"Our Divine Saviour," 320.

III. Epiphany.

THE HOLY FAMILY.

"He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."—*Luke* ii. 51.

1. The best plan on which to model our life must be that of the Holy Family.

2. And that is a thirty-years' example of *obedience*, *poverty*, and *labour*. And yet Divine Wisdom arranged it so.

3. Moreover, it was a seeming failure at the time; to teach us to *endure patiently*. Their kinsfolk and acquaintance envied and distrusted them (John i. 4, 5, 6; Luke iv. 16-30)

4. But those, who are in heaven now through imitating them in obedience, poverty and labour, can tell us of its success.

"Short Sermons," ii. 25.

IV. Epiphany.

CHRIST'S COMING HAS MADE IT EASIER TO *KNOW* GOD.

"Thou hast the words of eternal life."—*John* vi. 69.

1. Instead of prophecy or the vague results of reasoning, we have Christ's own divine words, which we can take with the completest trust,—that there is One God, and yet a Trinity of Persons,—the Father; Himself the Son; and the Spirit, Whom He promised to send.

2. He foretold His Death and Resurrection, and they came to pass as He had said.

3. He taught us the spirituality and immortality of our souls: He laid down the rules of right and wrong: the Judgment, and eternal reward or punishment.

4. He bade us learn of Him,—"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John xiv. 6).

5. Ignorance or forgetfulness of these truths is our ruin. Hence the necessity of learning and understanding the Catechism, attending instructions in School and Church, and the reading of spiritual books. The knowledge of God must not lie dormant, but rule our lives.

"Our Divine Saviour," 129, 130.

V. Epiphany.

CHRIST'S COMING HAS MADE IT EASIER TO *LOVE* GOD.

"Behold, how He loved him."—*John* xi. 36.

1. To realize that we have been loved, enkindles love in our own heart in return. And is not the Incarnation the proof and the manifestation of God's love for us.

2. For why did the Son of God become Man? "Propter nos homines et nostram salutem."

3. But love is not mere feeling or sentiment: it is the adhering to the one that is loved. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John xiv. 15).

4. Love seeks and grows stronger by intercourse, therefore the love of God thrives on Prayer.

5. The examples of the Saints show us this, and to what heroism love can attain. *E.g.*, SS. Agnes, Cecilia, Barbara.

VI. Epiphany.

CHRIST'S COMING HAS MADE IT EASIER TO *SERVE* GOD.

"Leaving you an example that you should follow His steps."—1 *Pet.* ii. 21.

1. The God-Man not only taught, but obeyed, prayed and worked.

2. So we, for His sake and to imitate Him, can serve God:—

(*a*) By doing the will of God (works of our sanctification, prayers, Mass, etc.).

(*b*) By fulfilling the duties of our state.

(*c*) By accepting what God sends us, trials, sickness, etc.

(*d*) By loving our neighbours,—practising the works of mercy.

(*e*) By avoiding sin and sinful occasions.

3. And by making a pure intention daily (yea, and frequently renewed) we can turn the routine of life into one long act of serving God.

"Short Sermons," i., p. 238. "The Catechist," i. 5.

Septuagesima.

CHRIST'S EXAMPLE IN HIS HIDDEN LIFE.

"Is not this the Son of Joseph?"—*Luke* iv. 22.

1. Christ's hidden life (thirty years out of thirty-three) was His time of preparation for the work of man's Redemption. He needed no preparation, but it was for an example to us.

2. Years of poverty, labour, obscurity, suffering.

3. How we resent these things in our life; and yet, if we would be pleasing to God, we must endure them resignedly, humbly, patiently, yea, even learn to love them.

4. In poverty, labour, obscurity, suffering accepted for the love of God, there are two great, special graces:

(*a*) *Safety* from sin and falling away from God.

(*b*) *Merit* that will open to us the kingdom of heaven.

"A Retreat," 150. "Our Divine Saviour," 343.

Sexagesima.

CHRIST'S PUBLIC LIFE A SEEMING FAILURE.

"We will not have this man to rule over us."—*Luke* xix. 14.

1. Christ's Public Life was the message of God's mercy to the world. His Name, words, miracles, sufferings—all spoke of mercy.

2. How was the message of mercy received ?

(*a*) By His kinsfolk at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16-29).

(*b*) By the disciples and crowds that had seen His miracles and been miraculously fed (John vi. 41-67). "They went back and walked no more with Him."

(*c*) By His friends even, for see how they behaved in His Passion—Judas, Peter and the disciples.

3. Is it now as it was then ? God's mercy is the same ! And what of ourselves ?

"Short Sermons," i. 81.

Quinquagesima.

HIS VICTORY TO BE HIS PASSION AND DEATH.

"Christ, by His own Blood, having obtained eternal Redemption."—*Heb.* ix. 12.

1. The Victory of obedience! "Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

2. This the supreme object of His becoming Man,—to redeem us.

(*a*) Blotting out sin. Sin being an offence against the Infinite Good, no one, but God made Man, could atone for it.

(*b*) Purchasing eternal life, for the gates of heaven had been closed by sin.

3. The shedding of the Precious Blood obtained eternal Redemption not once only, but through the Sacraments applicable to the souls of men, and offered daily in the Mass.

For third point, "Short Sermons," i. 243.

I. Lent.

WHY SHOULD CHRIST HAVE SUFFERED?

"You are bought with a great price."—1 *Cor.* vi. 10.

1. The God-Man could have atoned for sin by a tear or a prayer.

2. Why then did He suffer so cruelly?
   (*a*) To show God's infinite hatred of sin.
   (*b*) To inspire us with an intense horror of our sins.
   (*c*) To prove His love for us.
   (*d*) To prevent us despairing of forgiveness, when we realize the malice of our sins.
   (*e*) To encourage us to work, suffer and even die for the love of Him.

3. Remembrance of Christ's sufferings teaches us to be grateful, compassionate, contrite.

For first and second points, "The Catechist," i. 121. For third point, "Short Sermons," ii. 58.

II. Lent.

THE AGONY AND BETRAYAL.

"There is not a man with Me."—*Isa.* lxiii. 3.

1. The Prayer in the garden. The desolation and loneliness of Christ. "Can you not watch one hour with Me?"

2. The Agony. "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." At the sight of the sins of mankind; at the thought that His Passion would be of no avail to so many.

3. The contrast—Peter asleep; Judas busy and alert, making arrangements with the enemies of His Master.

4. The Betrayal:

(*a*) The humility and patience of Christ; the horror of that kiss of the traitor, and to know how often it would be repeated in bad Communions.

(*b*) Forsaken by His disciples.

"The Catechist," i. 100.

III. Lent.

THE SCOURGING AND CROWNING WITH THORNS.

"But Jesus held His peace."—*Matt.* xxvi. 63.

1. The *injustice* of the scourging intensified the *agony* of its infliction. Pilate said, "I find no cause in Him; I will scourge Him and release Him." What an outrage—innocent, but to be scourged! And the silent patience of our Lord.

2. It needs no words to make us understand for what sins our Lord endured the scourging. Self-indulgence, impurity, shameful sins of thought, word and deed were the scourges that tore the sacred Body of Christ.

3. Then Pilate brought Him forth crowned with thorns and a reed for a sceptre in His hands, and cried out, "Behold the Man." "But Jesus held His peace." Yes, the Judge to come standing there silent and forgiving, and the rabble condemned Him, "Crucify Him."

4. We can not only *compassionate* the sufferings of Christ, but in one respect, we can and are bound to *imitate* Him—viz., in His holy silence! No provocation, no injustice, no spite of His traducers made Him utter one word. How then can we refuse to keep silent under wrong, to show that we remember Him, and would imitate His self-control, His patience, His holy silence.

"Short Sermons," ii. 230.

IV. Lent.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

"And bearing His own Cross He went forth to . . . Calvary."—*John.* xix. 17.

1. The remembrance of this suffering of our Lord carrying His cross to Cavalry is enshrined in one of the most beautiful devotions of the Church, "The Stations of the Cross."

2. Picture our Saviour lovingly embracing the Cross on which He was to die for love of us. But His bodily strength was not equal to His love; hence the cruel falls, which are commemorated in III., VII., IX. Stations.

3. The meeting of the Son and the Mother! Could any heart refuse to repent that contemplated this meeting? In neither broken heart was there one drop of bitterness against *sinners;* —their heroic resolve was, *sin* must be atoned for.

4. And amidst His sufferings mark the gratitude of Jesus for compassion. Simon helped to carry the Cross—he was converted! Veronica offered the towel, and the impression of His sacred countenance was pictured on it! The women wept as He passed by, He consoled them and He warned them.

5. "The Way of the Cross" is the book of the Saints; learn it and love it.

Passion Sunday.

HIS MOTHER'S SHARE IN THE PASSION.

"There stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother."—*John* xix. 25.

1. His Blessed Mother not like one of us :
   (*a*) She had never sinned.
   (*b*) The Victim sacrificed was hers—her Son !

2. The chief sufferings of His Mother :
   (*a*) The meeting on the way, Jesus carrying the Cross.
   (*b*) Calvary ; the nailing,—the long three hours,—the Seven Words,—the blasphemies,—the spear.
   (*c*) The taking down from the Cross. Each wound beheld ; each wound with its piteous tale of sin to the Mother's heart.
   (*d*) The burial—the desolation of the Mother.

3. That Mother begrudged not the cost of our Redemption, neither her Son's sufferings, nor her own ; but she does expect and claim compassion and love in return.

"Short Sermons," ii. 242.

Palm Sunday.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all."—*Rom.* viii. 32.

1. The time for sympathy; the cruelty of forgetfulness.

2. The sufferings of body and soul:

Every sense had offered itself to martyrdom. And the soul had anticipated it all; and now saw not only those around, but the malice of every mortal sin that should ever be committed, thirsting for His Blood.

3. Ingratitude sharpened every agony; and what has our part been amongst the ungrateful?—we that have been so loved and blessed.

4. Again His grief that so many would refuse and scoff at the Redemption offered them.

5. Adore the Sufferer, the Son of God! How have we been loved, God spared not His own Son.

"The Catechist," i. 115. "Short Sermons," ii. 82.

Easter.

THE RESURRECTION THE VICTORY OF CHRIST.

"Lo, this is our God . . . and He will save us."—*Isa.* xxv. 9.

1. The Resurrection the proof of the Divinity of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 14-20).

2. His Victory was—

(*a*) *Over death:* for Christ was dead and buried and all Jerusalem knew it.

(*b*) *Over sin:* "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquities of us all" (Isa. liii. 6); and rising, He called sinners "Brethren."

(*c*) *Over the powers of the world:* for the Pharisees, Pilate, Herod, all had been leagued against Him. They had crucified Him, but He rose again.

(*d*) *Over the hearts of men:* that is what He longs for, the allegiance and love of those for whom He died.

"Short Sermons," i. 86, 87.

Low Sunday.

THE VICTORY OF CHRIST (*continued*).

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith."—1 *John* v. 4.

1. The veneration and exaltation of Christ, which began on Easter day, has lived and thrived through all time. He lives in His Church.

2. So the Church, too, is victorious through its Divine Master :—

(*a*) *Over death :* through its ministrations it transfers the souls of the faithful to the Church triumphant.

(*b*) *Over sin :* by the Sacrament of Penance renewing Redemption for the contrite.

(*c*) *Over the powers of the world :* persecutions, heresies, barbarians, the Reformation —in spite of all the Church exists and spreads.

(*d*) *Over the hearts of men :* the Easter Communion all over the world testifies to that.

"Short Sermons," i. 88.

II. Easter.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

"Then He opened their understanding."—*Luke* xxiv. 45.

1. The doctrines explained during these forty days were especially important. They were :

2. Christ *appealed* to and *explained* the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 27), and showed His disciples that He was the Messias.

3. Christ renewed the power that He had given His Apostles of forgiving sins (John xx. 22, 23).

4. And naturally, as we would anticipate, our Blessed Lord recalled the Institution of the Holy Eucharist (Luke xxiv. 30, 31). "And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him."

5. The true Church has ever clung to these doctrines.

"Short Sermons," i. 91.

III. Easter.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AFTER THE RESURRECTION (*continued*).

"Then He opened their understanding."—*Luke* xxiv. 45.

1. The next special subject emphasized by the Risen Saviour is the *Primacy of Peter*. He had already said to Simon (changing his name to Peter) that he was the rock, etc.; and now Christ commissions him to be the shepherd of His flock (John xxi. 15, 17).

2. Then the *Catholicity* of His Church. "Go ye into the whole world" (Mark xvi. 15 and Matt. xxviii. 19). And the history of the Church shows how thoroughly this has been done.

3. And the power of *miracles* made a test of the true Church (Mark xvi. 17, 18). This verified by the Apostles and Saints; and the power found in no other Church.

4. The last word was the promise of undying life to His Church. "I am with you all days" (Matt. xxviii. 20). Only one Church has always claimed to hold fast these seven truths.

"Short Sermons," i. 95.

IV. Easter.

CHRIST PROMISES THE HOLY GHOST.

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete."—*John* xiv. 16.

1. At the Last Supper Christ told His Apostles of the Holy Spirit, calling Him—

2. *The Paraclete*, which means a teacher, consoler, encourager, and best friend.

3. And our Lord called Him "another Paraclete," for had He not Himself been all that a Paraclete means to His disciples? And now that He was going, He would not "leave them orphans."

4. The Holy Spirit was to continue His work for all time :—

(*a*) *Teaching* to *believe*, *pray*, and *endure*.

(*b*) *Inspiring* souls with noble aspirations and courage.

(*c*) *Receiving* them back and comforting them when they had sinned and failed.

"A Retreat," 176.

V. Easter.

THE WORKINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"The Spirit of Truth . . . you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you."—*John* xiv. 17.

1. The Scripture tells us that He *dwells* within us. "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16).

2. That He is given to us as a *Pledge* (1 Cor. i. 22, v. 5).

3. That we are made *partakers* of Him (Heb. vi. 4).

4. That we are *led* by Him. "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14). "Walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 16).

5. That we are *taught* by the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 10, 12).

6. That He *helps* us and *asks* for us (Rom. viii. 26).

7. We are warned, "*Grieve* not the Holy Spirit of God" by our sins (Eph. iv. 30).

How little have the best of us thought of this Holy Spirit! Let us earnestly pray, "Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful."

"A Retreat," 183.

Sunday after the Ascension.

THE EFFECT OF THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts."—*Gal.* iv. 6.

1. *The fear of God* is the first effect of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. That fear which is the "beginning and the fulness of wisdom." That fear which makes us realize the presence of God, and to be anxious about Him.

2. *Love* is another effect. The disposition of our heart towards God as Father and Friend, by which we adhere to Him and strive to give our whole heart to Him.

3. *Peace* the third effect. That "peace which the world cannot give": peace in spite of life being a warfare: the peace of a soul that trusts that it is cared for and loved by its God, and is endeavouring to be faithful to Him.

"A Retreat," 186.

Pentecost.

THE HOLY GHOST AND THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH.

"You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost."—*Acts* i. 8.

1. This the promise of our Lord in His final words, and on Pentecost its fulfilment.

2. The effects of the coming of the Holy Spirit: The Apostles received :—

(*a*) All knowledge of the faith.

(*b*) Courage and strength.

(*c*) The gift of tongues and miracles.

3. See all this exemplified in Blessed Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.).

4. Thus the Church was commissioned :—

(*a*) To be the guardian of all truth.

(*b*) To preach to all nations.

(*c*) To prevail over all enemies—time, the world, and the devil.

"Short Sermons," i. 116.

Trinity Sunday.

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost".—*Matt.* xxviii. 19.

1. A mystery is a truth, which is above reason, but revealed by God. Mysteries admitted in science and the works of Creation, much more, then, should they be expected to be found in Religion.

2. Above reason, not against reason, received on the testimony of God.

3. *The* great mystery the Holy Trinity : Three Persons in one God. A mystery that we are bound to believe to be saved.

4. This mystery of the Trinity explicitly pronounced by our Blessed Saviour (the text). And the acceptance of this word of God in humility, faith, and obedience is obligatory.

5. And not only accept, but profess it openly and with gratitude, as often as we sign ourselves with the holy Cross, and say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

"The Catechist," i. 62. The Paulist "Five Minutes Sermons," 279.

II. Pentecost.

THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

"Great is Thy faithfulness."—*Lam.* iii. 23.

1. Our Blessed Lord's design to remain always with His Church. A mystery, yet within God's power, and an accepted doctrine of the Church—that bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, with His Soul and Divinity.

2. The miracles that foreshadowed it: and especially the miracle of the five loaves that were blessed and multiplied and fed five thousand people. Could not Christ work greater wonders with His Divine Body?

3. The object of His love was not to be in one place, as He was on earth, but to dwell in every Church, accessible to the faithful.

4. But what was the reason of it? That men should not lose sight of their Redeemer. Now—every Church is Bethlehem, is Nazareth, is Calvary.

"The Light of Life," 248.

III. Pentecost.

THE LOVE THAT IMPELLED CHRIST TO REMAIN WITH US.

"I have loved you with an everlasting love."—*Jer.* xxxi. 3.

1. The surpassing love of Christ in giving us Himself in the Blessed Eucharist. Of all His wonderful works this is the chief.

2. Love seeks union. "The property of friendship is to live with our friend."

3. Qualities of love :—
   (*a*) Strength : nothing can wear it away.
   (*b*) Unselfishness : doing good, not for our own sake, but for our friend's.
   (*c*) Modesty and self-effacement : knows not repeated assurances,—it cannot protest.

4. But love yearns for a return of love. Love pleads for itself.

"Short Sermons," i. 125.

IV. Pentecost.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

"In every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My Name a clean oblation."—*Mal.* i. 3.

1. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This the incomparable Sacrifice—God offering Himself to God!

2. We are bound to attend Mass:—
   (*a*) To show that we are God's creatures.
   (*b*) To acknowledge our Redeemer.
   (*c*) For our own soul's sake: it is offered for our "innumerable sins, offences, and negligences."

3. Through the Mass we offer God homage and thanks, and pray for the forgiveness and graces we need.

4. Devotion to the Mass the test of a good Catholic; it is his strength and his glory.

"Short Sermons," i. 129.

V. Pentecost.

HOLY COMMUNION.

"He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever."—*John* vi. 59.

1. The priest's Communion an essential part of the Mass.

2. And the faithful, who are in the state of grace, are privileged to communicate, and are exhorted frequently, and even daily, to do so. And why ?

3. Because Holy Communion is the fulfilment of the law of loving God with our whole heart :—

(*a*) Preferring Him to all things, bidding Him come and be Master there ;

(*b*) Detesting all that can separate us from Him ;

(*c*) And uniting our wills with His most blessed will.

4. Holy Communion is the life and food of our souls, and a pledge of future glory.

"The Catechist," ii. 179. "Short Sermons," ii. 183.

VI. Pentecost.

CHRIST INSTITUTED THE SACRAMENTS.

"All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth."—*Matt.* xxviii. 18.

1. All the Sacraments have their efficacy from the merits of the Precious Blood of Christ.

2. It is of Faith, both from Scripture and the Church, that the Sacraments were divinely instituted.

(*a*) Christ Himself was baptized, and bade His disciples "Go and baptize all nations."

(*b*) Christ promised the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father would send in His Name.

(*c*) Christ claimed the power to forgive sins, and twice bestowed the power upon His Apostles.

(*d*) Christ foretold the Holy Eucharist, and plainly declared, "This is My Body. Do this in commemoration of Me."

(*e*) Christ called the Apostles; gave them His powers: and commissioned them. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (John xvii. 18).

(*f*) Christ sent His disciples. "And they anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them" (Mark vi. 13). (This, if not a proof, insinuates the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.) Proof from St. James.

(*g*) Christ blessed Marriage by His Presence at Cana, and pronounced its indissolubility.

3. The Sacraments, then, being divinely instituted, no power of man can change or abrogate them.

"The Catechist," ii. 253.

VII. Pentecost.

THE SACRAMENTAL POWER ENTRUSTED TO THE APOSTLES.

"As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."—*John* xvii. 18.

1. Christ instituted this dispensation of mysteries and grace, and the Church has always claimed and used this power of the bestowal of grace by outward signs and words.

2. The Acts of the Apostles and Epistles tell us that the Apostles and disciples baptized, imposed hands, consecrated, loosed from sins, ordained, anointed.

3. And to this day, through all the ages, wherever the Gospel has been preached, there is found a man—a priest—who acts in the person of Christ, administering these same Sacraments.

4. How many have been imprisoned, banished, put to death for so doing? yet the work is still continued, but licitly and validly only in the One true Apostolic Church.

"The Light of Life," 189.

VIII. Pentecost.

CHRIST'S SUMMARY OF THE LAW.

"Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. . . . This is the greatest and first commandment."—*Matt.* xxii. 37, 38.

1. The emphasis our Lord lays on the one word "*love*" in His reply, replacing the servile fear of the Old Law.

2. What is this loving God with our whole heart, etc. :—

(*a*) Trying to *please* God alone; taking trouble to do it.

(*b*) *Desiring* God alone; the main object of our lives.

(*c*) *Trusting* God alone; not the friends, riches, and influence of this world.

3. Thus are we taught by our Blessed Lord; but is our daily life in keeping with our knowledge?

"Short Sermons," ii. 164.

IX. Pentecost.

CHRIST'S SUMMARY OF THE LAW.

"And the second is like to this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—*Matt.* xxii. 39.

1. Our Blessed Lord added: "On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets." How important, therefore,—all else included!

2. After the Last Supper, as a parting word, our Blessed Lord again said: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another," etc. (John xiii. 34). And, later on: "These things I command you, that you love one another" (John xv. 17).

3. The Apostles, having learned it from Christ, urge it themselves: "Before all things have a constant mutual charity" (1 Pet. iv. 8). "And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother" (1 John iv. 21).

4. The love of our neighbour must not depend on likes, whims, caprice, sentiment; it is a commandment always binding, and embracing all.

5. The love of our neighbour *effaces sin*, *turns* our heart to God, and makes Him the only aim and love of our lives, for our neighbours are loved in God and for God.

"The Light of Life," 284.

X. Pentecost.

CHRIST'S MOTHER: HER POSITION IN THE CHURCH.

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord."—*Luke* i. 38.

1. Of faith that Mary was ever a Virgin, and that she became the Mother of the Saviour through the power of the Holy Ghost.

2. In our Lord's life His Mother, known, acknowledged and obeyed as one, proved that He was man.

3. Afterwards in the Church, when heresies arose, the Mother became the test of orthodoxy, and it was declared of Faith (Council of Ephesus) that Mary was the *Mother of God*, and not only of the Man Christ Jesus.

4. As time went on, Mary became the object of devotion and piety. It grew to be accepted that all good things come to us through Mary.

5. And in our own days, who is the strength of the Church in reviving piety and fighting infidelity, but Mary Immaculate at Lourdes, and the Queen of the Rosary?

"Short Sermons," i. 231.

XI. Pentecost.

CHRIST TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY.

"Our Father, Who art in heaven."—*Matt.* vi. 9.

1. Christ, God made Man, all-wise, all-loving, composed this prayer, therefore the best of all prayers, and He taught it.

2. The first words lift up our minds and hearts to God, fixing our attention, exciting our devotion.

3. "Our Father,"—the name of love! touches the heart of God: enkindles our hope! for if He is Father, we are the sons of God and brethren of Christ.

4. "Who art in heaven." Where the Father is, there is the children's *home*. The honour, privilege, consolation to be taught that heaven is meant for us, to look upon it as our home.

"The Catechist," i. 307-312.

XII. Pentecost.

THE "OUR FATHER."

"Hallowed be Thy Name."

1. "Hallowed" means praised, honoured, sanctified.

2. The first petition then of this prayer is that all God's children may know, love and serve their Father, thus making His Name holy throughout the world.

3. Whereas so many of His children, and we ourselves so often, forget, disregard, or actually dishonour that sacred Name by careless and wicked lives.

4. Our duty to know and recite,—morning and evening, and devoutly,—this best of all prayers, and thus to learn to bear in mind why we are on earth—to honour God.

"The Catechist," i. 313.

XIII. Pentecost.

THE "OUR FATHER."

"Thy Kingdom come."

1. God's Kingdom in this world is His Church. So we pray that it may be *extended*, *prosper* and *be peaceful*.

2. God's Kingdom, again, is in the *hearts of men*. May it take possession of them by His grace; arouse to loyalty to avoid all sin and evil; and to make themselves perfect in His service.

3. God's glorious Kingdom "Heaven," which should be :—

(*a*) The object of our longing.
(*b*) Consolation in our trials.
(*c*) Courage in our labours.

4. For we can look up to those who have already gained the Kingdom, and behold their perfect peace, their joy, and glory.

"The Catechist," i. 315.

XIV. Pentecost.

THE "OUR FATHER."

"Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

1. God's Holy Will, and it alone, has the right to be accomplished :—

(*a*) Because He is the Almighty, All-wise, Creator, Redeemer.

(*b*) Because His Will is therefore always wise and just.

(*c*) Because His Will is always the best thing for us in every way.

2. It is the joy and peace of heaven that God's blessed Will is done—perfectly, perpetually, not one jarring note in that eternal harmony of bliss.

3. Our endeavour must be daily to do the Will of God :—

Purely to please Him.
Promptly, lest occasions slip by.
Cheerfully, trusting to God's goodness, however hard duty may seem.

"The Catechist," i. 317.

XV. Pentecost.

THE "OUR FATHER."

"Give us this day our daily bread."

1. As children of our Heavenly Father, we are here taught—all of us, rich and poor—to look up to Him for everything. No child can do without its Father. No one need be downcast whilst they have Him.

2. "This day our daily bread"—inculcates the daily duty of prayer, of gratefully turning to Him to Whom we owe all things. "This day" reminds us of the shortness of life—we may not need it to-morrow!

3. "Our daily bread" means all that is needful and requisite. But how pleasing to God, if we, like so many Saints, remember and ask for the Bread of Life, as often as we say these words—that frequent Communion may sustain us in life, and be our safeguard at death.

"The Catechist," i. 321.

XVI. Pentecost.

THE "OUR FATHER."

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

1. As children, wayward and disobedient as we all have been, how natural this petition for forgiveness. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John i. 8).

2. Our Lord came to *die* for "our trespasses." He only bids us *forgive* them that trespass against us.

3. But note the condition on which we are forgiven—"as we forgive them." Is that too much to ask from us, remembering all that God has to forgive us?

4. This an absolute condition: no evading it: impossible to receive God's forgiveness, unless we ourselves forgive. Otherwise, our prayer a mockery and a condemnation to us.

"The Catechist," i. 323. "Short Sermons," ii. 118, 119.

XVII. Pentecost.

THE "OUR FATHER."

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

1. Temptation is whatever may lead us to sin; not itself a sin, but only when consented to.

2. God tempts no man, but He permits temptation for our *trial*, *merit*, or *punishment*.

We therefore pray Him:—

(*a*) To restrain their power.

(*b*) To deliver us from extraordinary temptation.

(*c*) To give us strength to overcome.

3. Temptations—*internal*, arising from "self," concupiscence, bad habits, and past sins; *external*, from the devil, the world, bad company, etc.

4. "But deliver us from evil"—past, present, and to come (the Mass prayer) by His Angels, prayer, confession, and Holy Communion, the sign of the Cross, invocation of "Jesus and Mary," and by the avoidance of occasions to sin.

"The Catechist," i. 326. "Short Sermons," ii. 62.

XVIII. Pentecost.

THE NEW TEACHING OF CHRIST: THE BEATITUDES.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."—*Matt.* v. 3.

1. In the eight Beatitudes we see the *contrast* between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. And this was boldly declared in His first sermon.

2. Things dreaded or despised by the world are blessed by Christ. "Blessed are the poor, the mourners, the seekers after God, the merciful, the clean of heart, peacemakers! Whereas the world seeks after riches, happiness, self-glorification, greed, lust, revenge.

3. To accept and practise the things blessed by Christ is supernatural, but of obligation to His followers.

4. Otherwise we are not His or seeking to be His. He will rebuke us. "You know not of what spirit you are" (Luke xv. 55). There is no blessing for such; they are of the world, worldly, and the kingdom is not promised to them.

"The Catechist," ii. 342.

XIX. Pentecost.

THE BEATITUDES.

"Blessed are they who suffer persecution."

1. In pronouncing this last Beatitude, our Blessed Lord was addressing and encouraging, with words that would never die, that glorious army of martyrs—witnesses to Him—who would brave persecution for justice' sake.

2. How these words sustained and filled with heroism the hearts of His faithful followers we see in the Lives of the Saints.

3. So honoured are these Saints by the Church that day by day we read the names of some of the most famous in the Canon of the Mass.

4. Let us remember their courage and their eternal glory to help us to suffer—not death, indeed—but the daily, trivial, yet vexatious slights, contempt and slanders that we may have to endure for Christ's Name's sake. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12).

"The Catechist," ii. 356.

XX. Pentecost.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—*Luke* xix. 10.

1. Remembrance and adoration of the Sacred Heart is natural, pious and profitable, for it is the Heart of the Divine Person Jesus Christ.

2. The Sacred Heart awakens us to *remembrance* and *gratitude*, for His coming, His words, His acts, His Passion.

3. And remembrance leads us on to :—
Reparation: Contrasting His love and the sins and coldness of men, we cannot help but long to make Him some compensation.

4. And this desire leads us to :—
Sacrifice: to pray more, love more, imitate Him, suffer for His sake and with Him.

5. The Sacred Heart is the pledge and token of the mercy of God.

"A Bishop and His Flock," p. 149.

XXI. Pentecost.

CHRIST, THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I am the good Shepherd."—*John* x. 11.

1. How many times in the Gospel does our Blessed Lord refer to us as the sheep, and to Himself as the Shepherd! There is no other title that He seems to love so well.

2. Christ's description of the Shepherd,—Himself. He tells us that the sheep know his voice: that he knows them by name; that he leads them out to pasture; that they follow him; that if one is lost, he seeks it till he finds it, and carries it home on his shoulders, rejoicing; that the Good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.

3. And did not this same Blessed Saviour say: "How much better is a man than a sheep?" (Matt. xii. 12). And again: "I say to you that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that doth penance" (Luke xv. 7).

4. This was to show that if the shepherd was solicitous, how much more is Christ solicitous for each individual soul, that He does for us what the shepherd does for the sheep.

5. Let us at least repay such devotedness by hearing His voice and following Him.

"Short Sermons," ii. 126.

XXII. Pentecost.

CHRIST, THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

"But a certain Samaritan . . . was moved with compassion."—*Luke* x. 33.

1. The Parable (see Gospel) is so well known that it has become a proverb! And yet, as we read it, it is a beautiful revelation of Christ Himself.

2. The literal meaning, as He spoke it to His audience, was a rebuke to the priests and Pharisees for their uncharitableness.

3. The sacred meaning open to all Christians—the traveller — mankind; his enemy — devil; priests and levites—former religious—no help: the Samaritan—Christ our Lord!

4. But a deeper and a sacramental meaning for Catholics. "Oil and wine" tells us of the Sacraments; the inn—the Church, that cares for poor wayfarers at the sole expense of Christ's merits, till He returns again.

5. Let us be grateful, for how many times have we been befriended by the Good Samaritan!

"Short Sermons," i. 170.

XXIII. Pentecost.

OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST.

"At Thy word."—*Luke* v. 5.

1. To be true disciples of Christ, we must be ready at His word to do what He would have us do. He demands such obedience; our soul not safe if we are unwilling to obey.

2. Human respect, common sense, our own judgment, ridicule, fear of failure—none of these must deter us from obeying—"At Thy Word."

3. The example of Peter and the miraculous draught of fish (Luke v.) explains this lesson.

4. Peter obeyed in faith; Peter's reward!

5. We know not what God may some time demand of us; we must cultivate the faith, the readiness in our hearts, unhesitatingly to say,—"At Thy Word I will."

"Short Sermons," i. 134.

XXIV. Pentecost.

THE JUDGMENT.

"The Son of man shall come in His Majesty."—*Matt.* xxv. 31.

1. The Judgment is the vindication of Christ. Man may ignore Him in life, outrage His goodness, despise His Redemption, and trample on the Cross.

2. But at the Judgment Christ will come, no longer as the Redeemer, the Good Shepherd, etc., but as the *Rectifier*. Evil cannot finally triumph.

3. He will come as *Lord and Master*. Our passions, sins, bad habits, have been our master too long ; the world, the flesh, and the devil may have usurped God's place. And now, too late, we shall realize who is the Master.

4. And the Master becomes the *Avenger*. Outraged Justice, so long restrained by Mercy and Love, will pronounce the dreaded sentence.

5. But to the obedient and faithful Christ will be the *Rewarder*. Live so as to be found amongst the faithful few.

"A Retreat," p. 94.

THE SECOND YEAR

THE CHURCH

I. Advent.

THE CHURCH DIVINE.

"In the word of Truth, in the power of God."—2 *Cor.* vi. 7.

1. The foundation of our faith in the Holy Church is this : that it is not the work of man, but of God. Christ, Who proved that He was God by His Resurrection, sent, as He had promised, the Spirit of Truth to teach the Apostles all truth.

2. The Church was thus divinely founded :—

(*a*) To propagate the teachings of Christ infallibly.

(*b*) To last unchangeable throughout all time.

(*c*) To triumph over all evil.

3. History tells us how the Church has fulfilled its destiny,—it has outlasted dynasties and kingdoms,—no contradiction in dogma, no change in Sacraments.

4. And we are the children of the same divine Church. Do we reverence its teachings and obey its laws as we should ?

"Short Sermons," ii. 114.

II. Advent.

THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE.

"For what things soever were written, were written for our learning; that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope."—*Rom.* xv. 4.

1. We, Catholics, accept the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, on the authority of the Church, which existed before the New Testament was written.

2. How do other Religions know which are the Scriptures? Where did they obtain them? We have the Book, and the Teacher to explain the Book!

3. The Word of God in the Scripture is to our souls *medicine, food, strength, encouragement* and *direction.*

4. Hence the *necessity* to hear, read, and reverence the Holy Scriptures. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

"Short Sermons," ii. 5.

III. Advent.

THE CHURCH'S COMMISSION.

"Going therefore teach ye all nations; baptizing them."—*Matt.* xxviii. 20.

1. Two great features distinguish the Church of God, existing still in it, but to be found in no other Church.

2. The first is *authority* :—

(*a*) *In doctrine:* taught by the living voice, as Christ orders in the text, "Teach ye." The way to heaven shall be made plain. "And a path and a way shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way" (Isa. xxxv. 8).

(*b*) *In government:* "Great shall be the peace of thy children. . . . No weapon formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that resisteth thee in judgment thou shalt condemn" (Isa. liv. 13, 17).

3. The second is the *Sacramental* system: Baptize; impose hands; sacrifice; forgive sins—these ministrations are commanded in the Scriptures. How can other religions, whose sole rule of faith is the Scripture, account for the abandonment and neglect of these rites?

4. Cultivate the true Catholic spirit of reverence and obedience to the authority of the Church.

IV. Advent.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST A HOME.

"This is the inheritance of the servants of the Lord."—*Isa.* liv. 17.

1. The Church is a home provided by Christ for our souls in this world.

2. In this home there is *shelter* and *security* from ignorance, from worldly influences, from passions, from sinfulness.

3. There is *support:* for the food of the soul is the Word of God, and prayer, and the Sacraments;—and Faith, Hope and Charity, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

4. There is *love:* for He is in the midst of us, Who became poor that we might become rich; Who became the Son of man that we might become the sons of God.

He is the Father of the Home, and with Him are our brethren, those holy ones, who followed Him faithfully, and who encourage us by their example, their intercession, and their love.

"The Christian Inheritance," p. 273.

Sunday after Christmas.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

"That they may be sound in the Faith."—*Titus* i. 13.

1. If the Church is commissioned to teach, there must be a succinct summary of what men are bound to believe, to prevent vague and mistaken notions. The Apostles' Creed is the summary of these truths.

2. We are bound to *know, accept* and *reverence* these truths.

3. We are bound to *profess* them. The Creed is a prayer, hence the recitation of it not only helps us to remember it, but obtains us the grace

4. *To be loyal to it.* It is the charter of the freedom of the sons of God : our passport to the kingdom of heaven.

E.g., St. Peter the Martyr : staunch to it as a boy, and dying, he wrote "Credo" in his blood.

I. Epiphany.

THE FIRST ARTICLE.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."

1. To believe in and to acknowledge God is essential to our salvation.

2. The privilege and honour to be allowed to call the Almighty "Father."

3. "Creator of heaven and earth." Both for us! one for a short time of trial, we are mere pilgrims passing through it;—the other to be our eternal home, if obedient and faithful children.

4. Adore God's Providence! The Almighty ruling all things; nothing happens by chance. And remembering that all things come from the hand of the Creator gives faith and trust to our souls.

II. Epiphany.

THE SECOND ARTICLE.

"And in Jesus Christ."

1. The holy Name Jesus! a name of power and sweetness. A Sacramental, of itself having efficacy and power. St. Peter's first miracle.

2. The Name is a revelation of Him Who bears it—the Saviour; announced by the Angel to our Lady.

3. It is the Name, in which we—

(*a*) *Pray*, "through Jesus Christ our Lord."
(*b*) *Preach;* hence reverence for pastors.
(*c*) *Hope* for mercy. "Jesus Master, have mercy."
(*d*) The Name of Him, Who gives the Sacraments their power.
(*e*) With which upon our lips we hope to die. To gain the "last Blessing" the Holy Name the condition.

"Short Sermons," i. 29.

III. Epiphany.

THE SECOND ARTICLE (*continued*).

"His only Son, our Lord."

1. Explicit faith necessary that Jesus Christ is both God and Man. Heretics have denied that He was God, and therefore He could not redeem; others, again, that He was real Man, and only appeared to suffer and die ("The Catechist," i. 86).

2. We believe that as God, He has the same nature and is equal to the Father, Creator, and Lord of all; as God made Man, that He redeemed us, and one day will be our Judge.

3. Further, we believe that in Jesus Christ there is only One Person, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity; but that He has two natures, the nature of God and the nature of Man, having a body and soul like ours.

4. How necessary is the true Faith! "Now, this is eternal life; that we may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

"The Catechist," i. 70-96.

IV. Epiphany.

THE THIRD ARTICLE.

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

1. Prophesied by Isa. viii. 14: a mystery we believe and adore:—that God the Son took a body and soul like ours in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost.

2. Of faith that Mary was ever a Virgin (Council of Lateran, can. 3), and testified to by the Fathers of the Church.

3. The office of St. Joseph,—a guardian and a foster-father.

4. Christmas Day, Bethlehem, the stable, bring the sublime mystery home to the hearts of the faithful. The mystery, that we cannot understand, at least, like the shepherds, we can love and adore.

"The Catechist," i. 96-105.

V. Epiphany.

THE FOURTH ARTICLE.

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried."

1. *Who suffered?* Jesus Christ, God and Man: Innocence itself. "I find no cause in Him," said Pilate.

2. *What did He suffer?*
   (*a*) Excruciating pains and torments, scourging, crowning with thorns, being nailed to the Cross.
   (*b*) Shameful insults and outrages.
   (*c*) Abandonment by all,—betrayed, denied.
   (*d*) Anguish of soul. "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

3. *Who inflicted* the outrages?
   (*a*) His own people, God's chosen people, the Jews.
   (*b*) Those who had received so many graces, and had witnessed His miraculous cures.
   (*c*) Ourselves by mortal sin; for—

4. *Why* did He suffer?
   To atone for our sins, and to purchase for us eternal life.

"The Catechist," i. 105-119.

VI. Epiphany.

THE FOURTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

"Was crucified."

1. Crucifixion to the Jewish mind meant infamy and horror. A Roman punishment; the Jews could not inflict it themselves.

2. By the death of Christ the Cross has become our glory and defence.

3. The use of it in the Church in every blessing, Sacrament, and how repeatedly in the Mass.

4. The sign of the Cross is a Sacramental, and is a *power*, a *safeguard*, and a *sanctifier*.

5. Therefore we must never be ashamed of the Cross; on the contrary, we must make it with reverence, and sign ourselves with it when tempted. Belief in and love of the Cross will make us brave to suffer for Him, Who for us died on the Cross.

"Short Sermons," i. 121.

Septuagesima.

THE FIFTH ARTICLE.

"He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead."

1. The first triumph of Christ was to visit the souls of the just detained in Limbo, till the Redeemer came. Picture the joy of those holy ones from Abel to St. Joseph, the Prophets who had foretold the Messias, David who had sung of Him in the Psalms.

2. Then, as He had foretold, the glorious Resurrection of Christ from the dead, by His own power—the proof of His Divinity (1 Cor. xv. 16-20).

3. An historical fact; testified to by the Apostles, and even by His enemies, for the priests bribed the soldiers to say He was stolen (Matt. xxviii. 12), and the Jewish Council did not deny it, but forbade the preaching of it (Acts iv. 17).

4. The Resurrection is the proof and token of our Redemption and of our future resurrection unto life everlasting.

"The Catechist," i. 131.

Sexagesima.

THE SIXTH ARTICLE.

"He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

1. The Ascension into heaven, an act of His own Divine power, is the completion of the mysteries of the Incarnation.

2. Christ ascended to heaven :—

(*a*) To receive the reward of His merit and take possession of His kingdom.

(*b*) To open the gates of heaven to mankind. "I go to prepare a place for you" (John xiv. 2).

(*c*) To send the Holy Spirit upon the Church. "If I go, I will send Him to you" (John xvi. 7).

(*d*) To be our Mediator. "Christ, at the right hand of God, maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 34).

3. The Ascension the festival of Hope! Encouraged to virtue and piety; strengthened against trials and sorrows, our hearts are ready to follow Christ suffering, that they may reign with Him in glory.

"The Catechist," i. 141.

Quinquagesima.

THE SEVENTH ARTICLE.

"From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead."

1. The Judgment foretold by Prophets, and many times spoken of by our Blessed Lord. For instance, separating the wheat; the cockle; the lord entrusting his goods to his servants; the five foolish virgins; and the great description of it in Matt. xxv. 31, etc.

2. The Judgment will justify God's dealings with men: in this life the good have suffered, the wicked triumphed.

3. He, the All-wise, will judge thoughts, words, deeds and omissions.

4. The eternal sentence of an angry, outraged God,—irrevocable.

5. Remembrance of the Judgment would regulate our lives, preserve us from sin, nerve us to persevere.

"The Catechist," i. 147. "Short Sermons," ii. 1.

I. Lent.

THE EIGHTH ARTICLE.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost."

1. The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son. Other names given to the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures : the Giver of Life ; the Spirit of God—of Truth—of Christ ; the Paraclete ; the Sanctifier.

2. His workings in the souls of men can be learned from the effects He produced in the Apostles :—

(*a*) He confirmed their faith.
(*b*) He sanctified them,—imparting to them charity and His sevenfold gifts.
(*c*) He enabled them to found the Church, giving them patience, zeal and courage.

3. The want of knowledge and forgetfulness of the Holy Spirit is the cause of the weakness of our faith, our tepidity and worldliness.

"The Catechist," i. 168.

II. Lent.

THE NINTH ARTICLE.

"The Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints."

1. To perpetuate His teaching and His powers Christ founded the Church, or the union of the faithful.

2. The founder being the Almighty and All-wise God, the Church could not be deficient in any *truth*, or *power*, or *vitality*.

3. Moreover this divine Founder promised to His Church divine Presence and Support:

(*a*) That the Spirit of Truth "would abide with you for ever" (John xiv. 16).

(*b*) "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20).

(*c*) "That the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18).

4. Then how can this divine Church ever have needed man's reformation or improvement: and look well at those, who have presumed to reform or omit any doctrine or practice of Jesus Christ our Lord.

III. Lent.

THE NINTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH: ITS HEAD.

1. Christ Himself is the Head of the Church: but in His lifetime He appointed a visible head to replace Him after the Ascension.

2. This was Peter the Apostle, to whom Christ said, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xvi. 18, 19).

3. Peter was not appointed head just for his own day only, but to hand down his powers and authority (as Christ had handed them to him) for the benefit of all future ages, through which the Church was promised to exist.

4. The need of a visible head all the greater as time went on, and the Church spread over the whole world.

"The Catechist," i. 188.

IV. Lent.

THE NINTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH: THE POPE AND INFALLIBILITY.

1. Time has vindicated that the promises which Christ made to St. Peter have not failed, for the long line of Popes—259—successors of Peter, are the most ancient dynasty and with the widest sway of power, the world has ever seen.

2. And all this by the power of God, in spite of *persecutions*—for 300 years each Pope was martyred: *heresies*, fostered by Emperors and States: all the *world and the devil* could do.

3. And the Pope's power in the Church always supreme. His Infallibility—that is, his immunity from error in teaching faith or morals—was always believed in by the Church, and in 1870 was declared to be an article of Faith.

4. The Pope the supreme shepherd to guide and protect the Church, and his word obeyed, because he is Peter's successor, with Peter's power and authority.

"The Catechist," i. 193.

Passion Sunday.

THE NINTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH: SHE IS ONE.

"There shall be one fold and one Shepherd."—*John* x. 16.

1. The marks or characteristics of the Church are: one; holy; Catholic; Apostolic.

2. The Unity or Oneness must be *real, visible, perpetual.*

3. *Real* in faith, government, and worship.

4. *Visible*, or thwarts the object of the Church's existence.

5. *Perpetual*, precluding lapses, errors, and therefore any need of reformation.

6. Each member of the Church, by living up to the faith, can help to make the Church recognized.

"Short Sermons," i. 138.

Palm Sunday.

THE NINTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

THE HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH.

"A glorious Church . . . holy and without blemish."—*Eph.* v. 27.

1. The holiness of the Church derived from its Founder.

2. His object in founding the Church was so to endow it with Holiness and the means of Holiness, that it might make men holy.

3. Objection: Men were redeemed once, what more is needed?

4. The Church has to apply the means of Holiness—the Mass, the Sacraments—to the souls of men, as often as they require such helps, for repentance after sin, and to acquire the grace of God, forfeited by sin.

5. Objection: The Church holy? Look at bad Catholics. Argument false: It is not the Church, but *disobedience* to the Church that has made them bad.

Its Holiness vindicated by the eminent holiness of so many of its children, who have lived up to its precepts and practices.

"Short Sermons," i. 142.

I. Easter.

THE NINTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

THE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC.

"Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature."—*Mark* xvi. 15.

1. Catholicity an unmistakable mark: vainly claimed by others.

2. Picture the upper chamber in Jerusalem, and the first going forth of the Apostles, to fulfil the Text.

3. Picture again how the Gospel had spread even before the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul. "Their words unto the end of the world" (Ps. xviii. 5).

4. Persecutions for 300 years, and yet the Gospel was being carried further and further, for where were Martyrs not found?

5. Within fourteen years after the last persecution 325 Bishops assembled for the First General Council from all parts of the world.

6. Since then the Church has been ever spreading, subduing new kingdoms and continents to the gentle yoke of Christ. And now there are Bishops, holding their powers from the Pope, in every land upon which God's sun shines down.

"Short Sermons," i. 147.

Low Sunday.

THE NINTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

THE CHURCH IS APOSTOLIC.

"Stand fast; and hold the Traditions which you have learned."—2 *Thess.* ii. 14.

1. The New Testament was not written when the Apostles began to preach, and when others were joined with them, as Barnabas, Luke, etc. The "Good Tidings" they preached were handed down by them to the Apostles;—hence Apostolic Tradition.

2. Doctrine, then, and the Creed, and the Seven Sacraments, and the essential liturgy of the Mass depend upon Tradition from Apostolic days.

3. More, the Bible itself does! How do we know what is the Bible? It was handed to us by the Church, which tells us that Matthew and John and Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote for our instruction.

4. St. Paul's warning against "perverters." He bids us hold to the Tradition of the Apostles.

"Short Sermons," i. 149, 150.

II. Easter.

THE NINTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

"The Communion of Saints."

1. The Church triumphant—the faithful who have persevered in the service of God, and who are now enjoying their eternal reward.

2. The Saints and we are one in this :
   (*a*) They were men and women like ourselves, with weaknesses, passions, temptations.
   (*b*) They had the same Father, Redeemer, same means, motives to be saved, same end, Heaven.

3. But in one thing so different :
   (*a*) They had the *Will* to try their best for God :
   (*b*) We have not the goodwill to treasure the call to heaven, to fight the good fight, to venture all to be a Saint.

4. Let us encourage ourselves that we are in Communion with the Saints,—that they care for us, that they *can* help us, and *do* help us by their intercession with God. Make friends with them now, that we may be friends with them hereafter.

"Short Sermons," i. 261.

III. Easter.

THE NINTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

THE CHURCH SUFFERING.

"Thou shall not go out from thence, till thou repay the last farthing."—*Matt.* v. 26.

1. The Church of God embraces the Church *militant* on earth, *triumphant* in heaven, and *suffering* in *Purgatory*, a place where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins.

2. These souls are saved, are destined for heaven, but cannot enter as yet, because defiled by lesser sins unforgiven or having punishment still due to forgiven sin.

3. Temporal punishment often remains after the eternal punishment has been forgiven—*e.g.*, Adam and Eve forgiven by God, but condemned to a life of toil, etc.

4. We on earth can assist these souls to a speedier entrance into heaven by Masses, Communions, prayers, and good works, by penances and sufferings borne patiently and offered for them. This is a real Communion with the Saints, for the souls are holy, and by our help, will soon be in glory in heaven.

"The Catechist," i. 228. The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," 458.

IV. Easter.

THE TENTH ARTICLE.

"The forgiveness of sins."

1. God alone, of His own power, can forgive sin. Christ, as God made Man, claimed and used this power—*e.g.*, the paralytic (Matt. ix. 2), Mary Magdalene (Luke vii. 48).

2. Christ *gave* this power to the Apostles. "That penance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name" (Luke xxiv. 47; also Matt. xviii. 18; John xx. 23).

3. The Apostles *used* this power. Peter said to them: "Do penance and be baptized . . . for the remission of your sins" (Acts ii. 38); "Be penitent and converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19).

4. The Church has always claimed and used this power, transmitted to it from the Apostles, principally by Baptism and Penance.

5. Forgiving means
   (*a*) Removing guilt from the soul, and reconciling the offender to the Almighty.
   (*b*) Restoring thereby the life of grace, and freeing the soul from the power of the devil.
   (*c*) On condition of repentance, according to the regulations of the Church.

"The Catechist," i. 240.

V. Easter.

THE TENTH ARTICLE (*continued*).

SIN.

1. Sin is an offence, by thought, word, deed, or omission, against the Law of God.

2. Original sin, in which we are born, is forgiven by Baptism.

3. Actual sin, which we ourselves commit, is either mortal or venial : mortal whereby the soul is killed and deserves hell, or venial, which does not kill the soul, but displeases God.

4. To commit a mortal sin, there must be

(*a*) Grave matter.
(*b*) Clear knowledge of the guilt.
(*c*) Full consent of the will, rebelling against God.

5. The danger of venial or pardonable sin is that it is so little dreaded ; habits are formed ; the soul is weakened, and it so often leads to mortal sin.

"The Catechist," i. 245.

Sunday after the Ascension.

THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH ARTICLES.

"The resurrection of the body and life everlasting."

1. Our Blessed Lord's words, "And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life" (John v. 29). And again, "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life, and I shall raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 55).

2. It is only just that the body, which had to suffer in this life, and work and subdue itself for God's sake, should be raised up—to share the existence of the soul, to suffer no more, to have power and glory.

3. And thus that soul and body should obtain life everlasting or eternal inheritance, or eternal glory or the everlasting kingdom, as it is called in Scripture.

4. The Beatific Vision! "Eye hath not seen . . . nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9).

"The Catechist," i. 267.

Pentecost.

THE COMMANDMENTS.

"He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me."—*John* xiv. 21.

1. Christ endorsed the Commandments given of old to Moses (Matt. xvii. 37, 40 ; Mark x. 19).

2. Christ explained them and amplified them—*e.g.*, "Thou shalt not kill" ; "But *I* say to you, Love your enemies," etc. (Matt. v. 44).

3. Christ taught the *spirit* in which we have to keep the Commandments—*Love*. Love God, love thy neighbour. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10).

4. By the power of the Holy Ghost the Apostles remembered and understood all the things that Christ had said.

And therefore taught, explained, and handed down to the Church the explanation of the Commandments.

5. The Commandments are the *rule of life*. as the Creed is the *rule of faith*. The Commandments are a safeguard to us, not an infringement on our liberty.

"Short Sermons," i. 178.

Trinity.

FIRST COMMANDMENT.

"The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and Him only shalt thou serve."—*Matt.* iv. 10.

1. The first three Commandments regard Almighty God; our worship of Him; respect for His Name; the obligation of keeping one day each week holy in His honour.

2. We fulfil the First Commandment—

(*a*) By acknowledging the one, true God.
(*b*) By adoration and worship.
(*c*) By turning from all others to Him alone.

3. *Prayer*, then, is practically the fulfilment of it; by which

We acknowledge Him Lord and Master.
We desire His honour and glory.
We turn to Him in all our needs.
We ask His pardon for our offences.

4. To keep this faith in God pure, according to this Commandment;—we need Catholic education; to beware of mixed marriages; to avoid non-Catholic services and literature, spiritualists, and fortune-tellers.

"Short Sermons," i. 179.

II. Pentecost.

SECOND COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for he shall not be unpunished that taketh His Name upon a vain thing."—*Deut. v.* 11.

1. The only Commandment with a threat attached to it (Text and Exod. xv. 7).

2. Yet the Commandment that is most commonly broken for nothing. In laughter, joking, surprise, as a mere exclamation! This not grievous in itself, but most dangerous, lest we give scandal, lest anger, greed, revenge, drink burst into curses, oaths and blasphemies.

3. A lawful oath in the Name of God can be taken, when truth or justice demand it: and a vow can be made in deliberation, when it is a good and possible thing and made to God.

4. Whereas perjury, rash and unjust oaths, blasphemy, cursing, profane words, and lightly calling on the most Holy Name Jesus (so common now) are forbidden by this Commandment. Such "shall not go unpunished."

"The Catechist," i. 340. The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," 80, 83.

III. Pentecost.

THIRD COMMANDMENT.

"Remember thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day."—*Exod.* xx. 11.

1. Impressive wording "Remember." To forget then no excuse, for the Commandment is to remember. God demands it.

2. By observing it we acknowledge that we are His Children and servants: we bless Him for our Redemption; we draw down renewed blessings and graces.

3. How have to observe it? The Sabbath has been changed to the Sunday, and lest there should be any excuse of ignorance the First Precept of the Church supplements this Third Commandment, and lays it down, "To keep the Sundays and days of obligation holy by hearing Mass and resting from servile work."

4. And the Catechism teaches us so that all may understand, that it is a mortal sin to neglect Mass on these days, except for certain valid reasons—viz., sickness, distance, grave loss if certain work is omitted, etc.

"The Catechist," i. 180. "Short Sermons," i. 180.

IV. Pentecost.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

"Honour thy father and thy mother."—*Exod.* xx. 12.

1. So well known, so little observed! To have faithfully fulfilled a parent's duty, a valid claim to heaven: yet whose fault oftentimes is it, but their parents' that children break this Commandment.

2. Duties of parents: Love, see to early Baptism, work for, educate, train religiously, and to give good example.

3. Children's faults: Hate control; disobedient; notice parents' faults; think they know best; ungrateful!

4. This Commandment has a promise attached to it to encourage us to keep it. Honour thy father and mother,—obey, respect, help them in their old age,—"that thou mayest live a long time and it may be well with thee (Deut. v. 16; Exod. xx. 12; and Eccles. iii. 5-17.

"The Catechist," i. 427. "Short Sermons," i. 182.

V. Pentecost.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not kill."

1. This Commandment forbids not only murder, but all those sins that might lead up to it, and these likewise can be mortal sins—viz., anger, hatred, revenge, and their sequels, quarrelling, fighting, and doing an injury.

2. And the murder of the soul is forbidden too, brought about by scandal and bad example.

3. This Commandment would have us be men of *peace*—

We cannot even be angry.
We have to be reconciled to our brother before coming to the altar.
We have "to love our enemies, and do good to them that hate us" (Matt. v. 44).

4. We have, then, to watch over ourselves lest we bear spite or malice, lest our hearts be hardened.

Our helps: Prayer and remembering whose disciples we are,—of Him, Who, dying, prayed, "Father, forgive them."

"The Catechist," ii. 24. "Short Sermons," i. 188.

VI. Pentecost.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

1. This Commandment forbids all that is contrary to modesty and purity in looks, words, or actions.

2. Resist the beginnings, and seek safety in flight are the important rules in regard of impurity. Whatever we find leads to it must be cast aside at once—pleasures, theatres, dances, companions, books. And be at war with sloth and intemperance.

3. The deadly effects of such sins :

(*a*) They blind the understanding,—no fear of God's all-seeing eye.

(*b*) They harden the heart, so that prayer, Mass, sermons are despised and neglected.

(*c*) They weaken the will, so that it cannot resist temptation, or resolve to quit occasions.

(*d*) They lead to other sins, especially to bad confessions and Communions.

"The Catechist.," ii. 45. The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," 385. "Short Sermons," i. 189.

VII. Pentecost.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not steal."

1. This Commandment forbids all unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another, either by secret theft, open violence, or robbery, or fraud.

2. Included in this is waste by servants or workmen of their master's time or property.

3. And recklessly incurring debt, or, being in debt, making no real effort to repay. Sharp practice in dealing, adulteration of goods, and false weights and measures.

4. The difficulty of sincere repentance!

Restitution has to be made, if we are able, or the sin will not be forgiven. How hard to part with that which greed has made you acquire dishonestly. But how much harder if you have spent or used it, and you have to save up laboriously to repay.

5. The shame or fear of restoring no excuse for not doing so, it can be done anonymously, and your Confessor will help you.

"The Catechist," ii. 57. The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," 164, 433.

VIII. Pentecost.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

1. Who shall say that he never breaks this Commandment? "He that sins not in word, the same is a perfect man" (Jas. iii. 2).

2. Lies, rash judgment, tale-bearing, detraction, calumny—all are forbidden by this precept. And the guilt of such sins increased by the character of the person calumniated, and the number of persons to whom we have spoken.

3. Taking away our neighbour's character demands restitution, as well as taking away his goods. And this is very often both difficult and painful to do.

4. An evil word is a poisoned arrow, and who can tell the evil it may occasion?

And who will have to answer for the sins and crimes committed by those, who are goaded on by false and rankling words? Such sins as unforgivingness, hatred, revenge, because they had been reviled and calumniated.

"The Catechist," ii. 68.

IX. Pentecost.

NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife . . . or goods."

1. These two Commandments enjoin that we should watch over the evil inclinations of our hearts. "From the heart come forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, thefts" (Matt. xv. 19).

2. We are bound to stifle our evil thoughts—envy, covetousness, and lustful desires. If resisted, temptations (that we do not bring upon ourselves) are no sin ; even a source of merit and strength.

3. Our evil desires are lurking in our hearts, waiting for an opportunity, and these fateful opportunities occur in idleness ; in drinking ; in mixing with evil companions ; in looking at a bad book or picture ; in neglecting prayer ; in giving way to envy, repining, and greed for riches, etc.

4. This is our lifelong work—"Keep the Commandments." Pray and trust in God. In every command from God, there is a promise of help, if we attempt it ; a sure and eternal reward, if we fulfil it.

"The Catechist," ii. 84, 89. The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," p. 426.

X. Pentecost.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH: SECOND COMMANDMENT.

"To keep the days of fasting and abstinence appointed by the Church."

1. The First Commandment of the Church regulates how to keep the Third Commandment of God: the obligation of Mass and abstaining from servile work.

2. Fasting and abstinence enjoined from the earliest times as a sign of penance and mourning—*e.g.*, Eleazar, the Machabees.

3. The object—to mortify the flesh; to subdue our passions; to satisfy for sin. Every sin deserves punishment; self-denial is a punishment, satisfying God for sin, meriting grace and glory, and shortening purgatory.

4. The essence of fasting is but one full meal in the day—8 ounces for collation and 2 ounces allowed for breakfast. Abstinence is simply doing without flesh meat. The non-observance of either of these is a mortal sin, unless there is a valid reason.

5. Excuses from fasting not necessarily excuses from abstinence. Leave from the priest should be asked, lest we be too easy with ourselves.

And something else substituted—prayer, alms—for our sins require atoning for, and self-denial must be practised.

"The Catechist," ii. 111.

XI. Pentecost.

THE THIRD, FOURTH, AND SIXTH COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

"He that heareth you, heareth Me."—*Luke* x. 16.

1. These Commandments regulate the receiving of certain Sacraments—viz., Penance, Holy Eucharist, and Matrimony—which will be treated of in their places.

2. Their object is :—

(*a*) To interpret some Divine precept and secure its observance.

(*b*) To raise a barrier against the inconstancy of man.

(*c*) To aid and assist his weakness.

(*d*) To effect his sanctification.

(*e*) To promote the happiness of families and society.

3. The obligatory time for Confession and Communion is fixed ; if the *time* lapses, the *duty* does not : it binds until fulfilled. The age for First Communion is now much earlier than has been the custom. The introduction of this the glory of the present Pope Pius X.

4. The Sixth Commandment "not to marry within certain degrees of kindred "—of consanguinity, affinity, or spiritual relationship—nor to solemnize marriage at forbidden times.

"The Catechist," ii. 120, 129.

XII. Pentecost.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

"To contribute to the support of our pastors."

1. Temporal aid is necessary for the Church to exist and flourish, as regards its buildings and its ministers. This commandment provides for this by admission money, offertories, stole fees and donations.

2. A *duty*, neglect of which is a sin against *Religion*, for God requires a return of His gifts to testify His dominion; and against *Justice*; our fair share is not an alms, but liability for services rendered.

3. According to our means—the rich freely, the poor willingly. (The widow's mite.) The advantage of training children to give. The most careless, usually young men and women, who, though they have money for dress and pleasure, have no sense of responsibility, and begrudge anything for God's Church or His priests.

4. The blessing of it—a bond uniting priest and people. Influence of the clergy deepened and more devotedness found, where the congregation does all for its Church and pastor.

"The Catechist," ii. 125.

XIII. Pentecost.

THE SACRAMENTS.

"You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains."—*Isa.* xii. 3.

1. Without grace, man cannot believe or practise his religion. The Sacraments are the chief means of our receiving grace from the merits of Christ's precious Blood, which they apply to our souls.

2. All the Sacraments were divinely instituted by Christ, Who alone, being God, could give power to *matter* and *form* to supply grace to our souls.

3. It is not enough that we *believe* in the Sacraments, we have to *receive* them worthily in proper dispositions, for they are the chief means of our salvation, being so *effectual* in their operations, so laden with grace.

4. The Seven Sacraments divided :—

(*a*) Those for the *remission of sin*—the Sacraments of the *dead*—viz., Baptism and Penance.

(*b*) The other five—Sacraments of the *living*, to *increase the holiness* of the soul.

"The Catechist," ii. 132.

XIV. Pentecost.

BAPTISM.

"Teach ye all nations, baptizing them."—*Matt.* xxviii. 19.

1. Baptism is the first thing necessary for the soul, as it is the Sacrament which cleanses us from original sin (and, if any, from actual), makes us Christians, children of God, and members of the Church.

Delay about infant Baptism most reprehensible.

2. Everyone should know how Baptism is given, as the occasion may arise when it must be done. Pour water on the head of the child, saying at the *same time*, "I baptize thee in the Name," etc.

3. Amongst the ceremonies of Baptism are the promises made by the godparents (who should be Catholics) on behalf of the child to renounce the devil (author of evil), his works (sin), and pomps (worldliness). The sponsors are sureties for the child, to see that it is brought up a Catholic, if its parents fail to do so.

4. Baptism imprints a character of consecration on the soul—a Christian and a child of God—once and for all, and can never be repeated.

"The Catechist," ii. 148.

XV. Pentecost.

CONFIRMATION.

"Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost."—*Acts* viii. 17.

1. A Sacrament in which we receive the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of *Light*, *Love* and *Strength*, that we may be made strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

2. It aids us, then, to *hold fast* the Faith, *profess* it, and *suffer* for it.

3. The Bishop is the minister: *the matter*—the imposition of hands and anointing with chrism; *the form*—"I sign thee with the sign of the Cross," and "I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation in the," etc.

4. Preparation for, reception and remembrance of Confirmation most necessary in these days of irreligion, that the young Catholic may realize that he has enlisted under his true King, Christ, that he must be faithful and courageous in his religious duties.

"The Catechist," ii. 160.

XVI. Pentecost.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST—A SACRAMENT.

"Blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed."
—*John* xx. 29.

1. The Holy Eucharist differs from the other Sacraments in dignity, in grace (containing the Author of all grace), in permanency—resident in our churches.

2. It is the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, together with His Soul and Divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine. It was spoken of by our Blessed Lord (John vi.), prefigured in miracles, instituted at the Last Supper, and to be perpetuated—"Do this in commemoration of me."

3. This Sacrament elevates and strengthens the soul; there is an inflow of spiritual energy. Our Lord meant It to draw our will to adhere to Him above all things, and to Him alone.

4. The Council of Trent says: "It is an antidote by which we are delivered from daily faults, and are preserved from mortal sin." It is the union of Christ and the soul, and the soul clings and adheres to its Saviour.

5. Our preparation is chiefly removing obstacles (sin and the clinging to sin), and in a longing desire for It.

"A Retreat," p. 277.

XVII. Pentecost.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST—A SACRIFICE.

"In every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My Name a clean oblation."—*Mal.* i. 11.

1. In the Holy Eucharist our Lord has given us not only a Sacrament to sanctify us, but a Sacrifice, whereby to honour and worship God. His love was not satisfied with the Cross, it made that Sacrifice perpetual—the daily Sacrifice of the Mass.

2. Mass a real Sacrifice, for it is the offering of a Victim (Christ our Lord under the appearance of bread and wine) by a priest to God alone, in testimony of His being the Sovereign Lord of all things.

3. And yet the Mass, in essence, is one and the same Sacrifice of Calvary—the same Victim; to the same God; the same Offerer, Christ; for the same objects—viz., the glory of God and the salvation of souls!

The Manner alone is different.

"Our Divine Saviour," p. 101.

XVIII. Pentecost.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST—MASS THE CENTRE OF WORSHIP."

"You will not come to Me, that you may have life."—*John* v. 40.

1. Mass the chief act of Catholic devotion. "God Himself" (says St. Alphonsus) "cannot cause an action to be performed which is holier and grander than the Mass." Whatever the Passion did or does, that the Mass can do.

2. By sin we can lose heaven, though we have been redeemed. The Mass, then, must *draw*, *strengthen*, *pardon* us, and obtain *perseverance*. It is for this that there is the daily Mass.

3. There are four things in the Mass : (*a*) There is Christ Himself ; (*b*) His Sacrifice ; (*c*) His power ; (*d*) the correspondence of our own heart.

4. Therefore Mass is the time—

(*a*) For worship.
(*b*) Giving of thanks.
(*c*) Asking pardon of sin.
(*d*) Petitioning for grace and help. It is not our *unworthiness*, but our *unwillingness* that is the obstacle to the efficacy of the Holy Mass.

"A Retreat," p. 292.

XIX. Pentecost.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

"If your sins be as scarlet they shall be made as white as snow."—*Isa.* i. 18.

1. Penance is the Sacrament of mercy, whereby our sins, mortal and venial, are forgiven. Being a Sacrament, it was instituted by Christ (John xx. 23; Matt. xviii. 18), and has its power from the merits of the Precious Blood.

2. Penance can be repeated as often as we wish; and if we are penitent, there need be no fear of the want of forgiveness.

3. The *matter* of this Sacrament—Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction; *the form*—"I absolve thee," etc.; and *inward grace* is conferred:—

(*a*) It takes away actual, mortal and venial sin, and the eternal punishment due to sin.

(*b*) It restores sanctifying grace and the merit of good works done in grace.

(*c*) It gives strength against relapses.

4. Hence we see the *benefit* of frequent Confession—pardon of sin and its punishment, and increase of grace. Many Saints confessed daily.

XX. Pentecost.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE—CONTRITION.

"A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."—*Ps.* l. 19.

1. Contrition defined—"a hearty sorrow for our sins, because by them we have offended so good a God, together with a firm purpose of amendment."

2. Qualities of contrition :—

(*a*) Interior, from the heart.
(*b*) Supernatural, for fear or love of God.
(*c*) Sovereign, above all.
(*d*) Universal, including all mortal sins at least.

3. Motives of sorrow : loss of heaven ; the sufferings of Christ ; the goodness of God.

4. "With a firm purpose of amendment, not only to avoid sin, but the dangerous occasions of it. A *determination* by God's grace to take the means to avoid sin.

5. Perfect contrition—intense, and for the pure love of God obtains forgiveness of sin itself, provided we intend or desire to confess at least our mortal sins.

"The Catechist," ii. 214. "Short Sermons," i. 65.

XXI. Pentecost.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE—CONFESSION.

"He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but he that shall confess and forsake them shall obtain mercy."—*Prov.* xxviii. 13.

1. The next part of Penance is Confession. Lest we hide our sins, we must prepare by *examination* of conscience. This is our own duty, not the confessor's, though he will help if asked to do so.

2. Then with contrition we make our confession—that is, accuse ourselves of our sins to a priest—with the hope of obtaining pardon. It must be complete and entire as to mortal sins.

3. "Forsake them." True repentance is a change of life. Some things have to be forsaken, or Absolution cannot be given—*e.g.* :—

(*a*) Those at *enmity* must forgive.

(*b*) Those who have *wronged* another must *mean* to restore.

(*c*) Those living in the *proximate occasion* of sin are bound to use the means necessary to save them from relapsing.

4. The blessed ending—*Absolution*. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9).

"Short Sermons," i. 69.

XXII. Pentecost.

EXTREME UNCTION.

"Anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord."—*Jas.* v. 14, 15.

1. The tender mercy of God has a Sacrament to comfort our last hours. How grateful we should be, whereas how few think of it, or pray daily that they may have the happiness of receiving it.

2. Instituted by Christ, but when is not known. Insinuated by the text from St. Mark vi. 13: "Anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." But it is proved to have been in use in Apostolic times by St. James. See text.

3. *Matter* of the Sacrament, the anointing with oil, the senses by which we can sin, and the *form*, the prayer accompanying it: "By this holy anointing and of His most tender mercy, may the Lord forgive thee," etc.

4. Only to be administered in danger of death by sickness, and even to the unconscious. It comforts and strengthens the soul, and remits sin. Dying, we can do so little, but the Sacrament, efficacious of its own power, can do so much.

"The Catechist," ii. 253.

XXIII. Pentecost.

HOLY ORDERS.

"They ordained priests in every Church."—*Acts* xiv. 22.

1. To carry on the work of the Church, Christ did not choose angels, but *men;* and they are consecrated to His work by the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

2. The Sacrament instituted by Christ, for He commissioned His Apostles to baptize, teach, consecrate, forgive sins, and to renew members in their own ranks, for Christ said, "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (John xx. 21; see text, and 2 Tim. i. 6; Titus i. 5).

3. The *matter* of the Sacrament is the imposition of the Bishop's hands and anointing with chrism; the *form*, the prayers said by the Bishop. The inward grace increases sanctifying grace, gives power and grace to perform their sacred duties, and imprints a character. "Thou art a priest for ever" (Ps. cix. 5).

4. The power of the priesthood is the power of Christ, and this is enhanced by their only being men, set apart, indeed, by their office, but united to and loved by their fellow-men through their solicitude and love for souls.

"The Catechist," ii. 264. "The Light of Life," p. 189.

XXIV. Pentecost.

MATRIMONY.

"This is a great Sacrament."—*Eph.* v. 32.

1. Matrimony is so often regarded merely as a contract, natural and civil, whereas it is a Sacrament instituted by Christ; guarded by regulations of the Church; to be entered upon in a state of grace, otherwise a mortal sin and a sacrilege.

2. In this Sacrament the parties contracting are themselves the ministers, and the form is the expression of their consent; the priest being only the approved witness, in whose presence the marriage must take place to be lawful and valid.

The form of marriage before the Registrar or a non-Catholic minister is no longer valid.

3. Mixed marriages always disapproved of by the Church, though sometimes allowed for grave reasons. Discountenanced by the Church, for generally they are a hindrance and danger to Religion. Divorce not acknowledged by the Church.

4. The Blessings of the Sacrament of Matrimony are:—

(*a*) To enable them to bear the difficulties of life.

(*b*) To love and be faithful to each other till death.

(*c*) To bring up their children for God.

"The Catechist," ii. 276. The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," p. 86.

THE THIRD YEAR

OURSELVES

I. Advent.

CHILDREN OF GOD AND OF THE CHURCH.

"We are the sons of God: and if sons, heirs also."—*Rom.* viii. 16, 17.

1. Our destiny is revealed to us by the words "Our Father, Who art in heaven." We, too, must be there for ever, or we have failed in the very object of our creation, and dishonoured our Maker.

2. This destiny is for us: God longs for us to gain it. Has He not, therefore, given us all means to secure it—yea, even to make it easy of attainment?

3. God Himself became Man—our Brother—to be our model, teacher and strength.

4. And He has given us the shelter and security of the Church; all we have to do is to be childlike and obey.

5. When we are weary in well-doing, let us remember who we are—our destiny! "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared to the glory to come" (Rom. viii. 18).

II. Advent.

THE VALUE OF OUR SOUL.

"What exchange shall a man give for his soul?"—*Matt.* xvi. 26.

1. The value Almighty God sets upon our soul is seen from the *price* He gave for it—His Son to be its Saviour.

2. How do we ourselves value our souls?

Theoretically, quite correct! "Thou hast answered rightly."

Practically, "This do and thou shalt live." Our daily actions—selfishness, worldliness—make a dreadful contrast.

3. What exchange can this world, that passeth away, give us for our soul, which has been created and purchased for heaven?

4. Let us care for our souls and fit them for His acceptance, Who has loved souls so much.

"Short Sermons," ii. 13.

III. Advent.

THE CARE OF OUR SOUL.

"Alive unto God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."—*Rom.* vi. 11.

1. The contrast—the care taken of our bodily health and well-being,—and the neglect of our soul.

Life means—health, strength, power to fulfil our duties, to enjoy existence.

2. Are our souls in health, strength, vigour, cleanliness, and beauty? How few give a thought to this! The care for a body that has to last a few years! And no thought or trouble for an immortal soul!

3. Yet the *danger* of being content, if our souls are not healthy and vigorous. The diseases of the soul are dangerous, because unnoticed and neglected; and more than that, they are *aggravated*—spiritual blood-poisoning and mortification set in through the agency of the devil.

4. The *remedy* is at hand! Our souls can be strong and vigorous "in Christ Jesus, our Lord." *Food* is the great requisite for body and soul. And the Bread of Life sustains, causes growth, repairs loss of strength, and keeps in health. "If any man eat of It, he may not die" (John iv. 50).

"Short Sermons," ii. 134.

IV. Advent.

THE REDEEMER OF OUR SOULS.

"He will save us."—*Isa.* xxxiii. 22.

1. Christmas recalls the coming of the Saviour. "He came unto His own. . . . As many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God" (John i. 11, 12).

2. But what the motive of this infinite kindness? Why should He come and save us? Simply through love! And as He was God and man He had full power to do what He loved to do —save us.

3. In what manner did He choose to save us? He did what love prompted Him to do. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us" (John i. 14). The picture of Christmas!

4. And having come, He could not find in His Heart to leave us. As Man He had to, but in the Holy Eucharist it is always Christmas; He dwells with us,—continuing His work of saving! Proving His love; awakening ours!

"Short Sermons," i. 13.

Sunday after Christmas.

GRACE.

"Being justified by His Grace."—*Titus* ii. 5.

1. Grace the life of our soul, as the soul is the life of the body. We hold that sanctifying grace "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7); that "it forgiveth our iniquities and healeth our diseases" (Ps. cii. 2); that by it "we become holy and unspotted in His sight by charity" (Eph. i. 4).

2. Therefore prayer and good deeds by grace are made meritorious of life everlasting. "Being justified by grace, we may become heirs to life everlasting." Text.

3. Grace a most precious gift, for what was paid for its purchase? The precious Blood of Christ.

4. And a gift so easily lost, but always through our own fault. Can we regain it? and how? By prayer and the Sacraments. Let us treasure it. "Neglect not the grace that is in thee" (1 Tim. iv. 14).

"A Bishop and His Flock," pp. 40, 47. "Short Sermons," ii. 102.

I. Epiphany.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

"Walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called."—*Eph.* iv. 1.

1. To have grace given to us is not enough; we have to correspond to it. No man will work his best unless he sees the obligation and responsibility of his having to do so.

2. We are responsible—

(*a*) To ourselves, for our salvation depends on it.

(*b*) To others—neighbours, children, etc.—for we cannot help but influence others for good or evil.

(*c*) To God, our Master: prefigured by our Lord as the master who entrusted money to his servants to trade with.

3. There will be a day of reckoning! To have had grace will not save us, unless we have corresponded and done our best with it.

4. Can we refuse loyal and zealous co-operation with grace to Him Who has purchased it for us and given it to us so abundantly?

"Short Sermons," i. 191.

II. Epiphany.

NEGLECTED GRACE IS WITHDRAWN.

"I hid My face from him, and he went wandering in the way of his own heart."—*Isa.* lvii. 17.

1. How often is grace offered to us, and we make no response ?

(*a*) The voice of God calling us,—we heed it not.

(*b*) The seeking of us by the Good Shepherd, —we hide ourselves from Him.

(*c*) Christ knocking at the door of our hearts, —and we open not !

2. There is a limit to the number of graces that are to be offered to us, as there is to the hours of our life. Ah ! we know not the last one.

3. Picture Christ in His mercy offering us graces. Picture Christ driven by our neglect to hide His face from us !

4. Can we hesitate in deciding whether to humbly welcome grace and use it strenuously, or to neglect and reject it, and thus bring ruin on our souls ?

"Short Sermons," i. 77 ; ii. 158.

III. Epiphany.

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES—FAITH.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God."—*Heb.* xi. 6.

1. The Theological Virtues, which have God for their object—viz., Faith, Hope, and Charity—are infused into our souls at Baptism, and are the chief means of worshipping God.

2. Faith is belief in God and in His revealed Truths (Creed), and is absolutely necessary for salvation.

3. Faith guides the *reason* in thinking; directs the *moral* power in conduct; fills the *heart* with devotedness to God; recognizes that any abandonment or *denial* of a truth is an offence and injury to God.

4. Effects of faith:

(*a*) Foundation of all other virtues.
(*b*) Gives merit to our good works.
(*c*) Is our victory over the world.

5. Faith is *endangered* by company of unbelievers; mixed marriages; reading certain books; and is *lost* by wilful doubts, heresy, and apostasy.

"The Catechist," ii. 296. "A Bishop and His Flock," p. 26.

IV. Epiphany.

HOPE.

"We are saved by hope."—*Rom.* viii. 24.

1. Hope is the sunshine of the soul : enables us in the weariness and trials of life to look up and trust in the fatherly care of God and the reward to come.

2. It is necessary for salvation. Without hope there would be an abandonment of all good endeavour, and then despair. Foolish hope leads to presumption of God's mercy.

3. Hope is both *expressed* and *increased* by prayer and petition : especially by the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary."

4. Its effects :

(*a*) Courage and resolution in the service of God.

(*b*) Triumph over difficulties and temptations.

(*c*) Peace of mind, so necessary for devotion and perseverance.

"The Catechist," ii. 298. "Short Sermons," ii. 106.

V. Epiphany.

CHARITY.

"If I have not charity it profiteth me nothing."—1 *Cor.* xiii. 3.

1. Charity is the love of God above all things, and the love of our neighbour in God and for God. The queen of virtues. Text.

2. Essential for our salvation, or with it—

   (*a*) We keep the Commandments of God and the Church. "He that hath My Commandments and keepeth them: he it is that loveth Me" (John xiv. 21).

   (*b*) We are merciful to our fellow-men. "This is My Commandment, that you love one another" (John xv. 12).

3. The effects of charity:

   (*a*) Zeal for God's honour and glory.

   (*b*) Sorrow for and avoidance of sin, lest we lose charity.

   (*c*) Strength and merit; everything done in charity has an eternal reward.

4. Charity lost by grievous sin. Constant acts of charity and frequent Communion the best means of maintaining the fervour of charity.

"The Catechist," ii. 299.

VI. Epiphany.

CHARITY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR.

"Forgive, and you shall be forgiven."—*Luke* vi. 37.

1. Charity towards our neighbour is the oil that keeps the flame of the love of God burning.

2. Forgiveness of injuries commanded by our Lord : in the " Our Father " made the *measure* of our own forgiveness.

3. No evading the obligation ; no possible excuse ; and the occasion to practise it presents itself, we may say, daily.

4. How often have we to forgive ? " Seventy times seven " (Matt. xviii. 22).

5. To urge us to forgiveness,—

(*a*) *Remember* how *often* we have to ask for forgiveness.

(*b*) The *enormity* of our offences.

(*c*) The *love of Him,* Who shed His Blood as the price of our forgiveness.

"Short Sermons," ii. 42 and 43, 118.

Septuagesima.

WHAT RUINS CHARITY.

"The tongue . . . an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison." —*Jas.* iii. 5.

1. The ruin of charity brought about by the tongue. The restraint of the tongue the last thing even piously inclined people learn.

2. Rash judgment ; finding fault ; unkind and cutting words ; repeating malicious things ; hastiness of speech ; angry recriminations ; backbiting —how full is the world of all such things !

3. Inconsiderate, thoughtless in many cases, yet even that does not prevent the evil consequences. Peace of mind, prayerfulness, devotion often destroyed by the malicious tongue. And from its poison spring up rancour, enmity, and desire of revenge.

4. A life's work it is to watch over our tongue ; to fear committing sin by it ; to endeavour to have " constant, mutual charity " (1 Pet. iv. 8).

" Short Sermons," i. 111 ; ii. 147.

Sexagesima.

HOW TO FOSTER CHARITY—KINDLINESS.

"And this Commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, loveth his brother."—1 *John* iv. 21.

1. Charity thrives on kindliness! Kind thoughts, words and deeds. Find excuses, instead of judging; be the first to speak and apologize, even if not in the wrong.

2. Actual charity,—visit the poor; show sympathy to the sorrowful; pray with the dying. Never refuse an alms; if too poor, spare a kind word.

3. See and wonder at the countless examples of the Saints, who made time lovingly to visit hospitals and tend the sick, and do the most menial services. They knew that nothing was comparable to this to enkindle charity in their hearts.

4. In being charitable, generosity and sympathy should go hand in hand. Nothing draws us nearer to God and increases our own personal holiness more than practical kindliness to our brethren.

"A Retreat," p. 319. "Short Sermons," ii. 44, 120.

Quinquagesima.

CHARITY—OUR MODEL.

"He, that is a friend, loveth at all times."—*Prov.* xvii. 17.

1. Our Lord and Saviour is our Model in all things, and especially in charity. He claims to be our Friend. "But I have called you friends" (John xv. 15).

2. Think what manner of Friend He is:

(*a*) All-wise—counsellor, guide, teacher.

(*b*) All-powerful—whom need we fear protected by such a friend?

(*c*) All-loving—all hope and consolation from His friendship.

3. Alas! how have we treated this Friend?

With forgetfulness, coldness, neglect and ingratitude. How often have we put Him off and kept Him waiting? and for what?

4. How should we treat Him?

Trust Him; long after Him; and adhere loyally to Him.

"Short Sermons," ii. 202.

I. Lent.

OUR DUTIES—THE SERVICE OF GOD.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—*Acts* ix. 6.

1. As creatures of God is it not right that our life should be spent and devotedly spent in the service of God?

2. The example of St. Paul shows us why we should work with all zeal. Why did he? Because he valued the grace of God, which

(*a*) Had singled him out, chosen him, and passed others by:
(*b*) Made all things work to his good:
(*c*) Secured heaven for him as a reward of his labours.

3. And because of the years that he had wasted, and the evil that he had done.

4. Let us turn from St. Paul to ourselves:—

(*a*) We have been called to the service of God, whilst others know Him not.
(*b*) And past wasted years urge us on, for how little we have done as yet.

5. The work—the service of God—is before us—prayer, Mass, the Sacraments, charity, and keeping the Commandments.

"Short Sermons," i. 53.

II. Lent.

OUR DUTIES—WORSHIP.

"They shall glorify and love Thy Name."—*Ps.* lxxxv. 9.

1. Worship is acknowledgment and love. We adore and confess our Creator, as Father, Master, Redeemer, and our Last End.

2. And love follows; for adoration leads to admiration, thanksgiving, trust, devotion—in one word,—to love.

3. Such is man's duty to use his heart and mind to praise and worship his God; and its continual practice through life is necessary to keep alive Faith, Hope and Charity within us.

4. Worship is the *preparation* for heaven, for what other is the occupation of the blessed?

So to save ourselves from the world and the spirit of the world, we are bound to worship and praise day after day.

5. And our worship is raised up and sanctified, and made acceptable to God, by being united to the worship and praise that our Blessed Lord offered on earth.

"The Christian Inheritance," p. 193.

III. Lent.

OUR DUTIES—OBEDIENCE.

"Obedience to the Faith."—*Rom.* i. 5.

1. Christ said, "He that heareth you, heareth Me," therefore the Church has always challenged, not only man's acceptance, but his obedience to its Doctrines and precepts.

2. The rejection even of one doctrine—*e.g.*, the Immaculate Conception, Papal Infallibility—is a rebellion against its authority. Therefore the danger of criticizing, or being led astray by newspaper abuse of the Pope, etc.

3. And our religious exercises have to be done in the same spirit of obedience,—the Sunday's Mass, the Easter Confession and Communion, the Friday's abstinence. No amount of self-chosen prayers, etc., can make up for disobedience to these.

4. The security from error and the eternal reward of obedience far more than compensate for the sacrifices we make in obeying the Church.

IV. Lent.

OUR DUTIES—TO TAKE UP OUR CROSS.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow Me."—*Matt.* xvi. 24.

1. The Cross represents the trials and sufferings of life, which are sure to occur, which have their uses, yea, which are necessary.

2. How many resent sufferings and become enemies of the Cross, by which they were redeemed. Who are they?

(*a*) Those who "mind earthly things" (Phil. ii. 8)—*i.e.*, who are engrossed with the pleasures and pursuits of this world.

(*b*) Those who indulge in luxury and drink. Such as these end by losing their faith.

3. And how can we find strength to deny ourselves, to take up the cross—not to choose it—but obediently take up the cross God sends us?

By *following* Christ—there is strength in being near Him.

4. Following Christ—the *sure* way to heaven. Can we complain, when He went first? Take courage that so many have toiled along the way of the Cross,—the Saints and faithful ones of God. The Cross is their glory now.

"Short Sermons," i. 37; ii. 70.

Passion Sunday.

THE BLESSING OF SUFFERINGS.

"That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure an exceeding weight of glory."—2 *Cor.* iv. 17.

1. Suffering, if accepted humbly, brings out the good in a man and sanctifies him ; though ruin to one who resents and murmurs at it. It *intensifies* our prayers and makes us *unite* ourselves to God.

2. Suffering helps us to realize the enormity and malice of sin ; atones for the past ; and shortens purgatory.

3. Sufferngs are the *messengers* of God : and are often sent in mercy to recall us from a life of worldliness, frivolity and sin : and force us to remember God, Who by weaning us from pleasure, would have us adhere to Him.

4. Suffering is the distinctive mark of the Saints, and should encourage us to obey and imitate our Crucified Master. "For whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth" (Heb. xii. 6).

"A Retreat," pp. 170, 307. "Short Sermons," ii. 94, 131. The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," p. 311.

Palm Sunday.

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS FOR US.

"Christ, by His own Blood, having obtained eternal Redemption."—*Heb.* ix. 12.

1. What the Precious Blood has done for us!

(*a*) By It we were redeemed from sin and hell.

(*b*) We were enriched with grace.

(*c*) Our title deeds to Heaven written in it.

2. And over and over again it is applied to our souls by Penance and the Holy Eucharist. The devout and the careless;—those who are grateful for the sufferings of Christ, those who forget them—can come to Him, Who loved us and washed us in His own Blood.

3. What a motive for zeal to remember the Precious Blood,—shed with such anguish so abundantly and all for love of us.

4. We sin because we forget it; but *forgetfulness* is *ingratitude*.

"A Retreat," p. 159. "Short Sermons," i. 243.

Easter.

OUR GREAT DUTY—THE EASTER COMMUNION.

"That as Christ be risen from the dead . . . so we also may walk in newness of life."—*Rom.* vi. 4.

1. As the Pasch, or Passover, was so religiously observed by every Jew, so the New Pasch—the Easter Communion—should be by every Catholic. The Jews celebrated deliverance from an earthly bondage, we from the eternal bondage of sin and hell.

2. Christ has made Himself the food of the wayfarer, and we are indeed wayfarers to the promised land of heaven.

3. We must set out then

(*a*) "In sincerity and truth": "in newness of life."

(*b*) With determination to persevere.

(*c*) And to hurry on the journey.

4. And the motive in our hearts "to seek and mind the things that are above" (Col. iii. 12).

The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," pp. 173, 179. "Short Sermons," ii. 86.

Low Sunday.

OUR HELPS TO FULFIL OUR DUTIES—THE REMEMBRANCE OF GOD.

"And the Lord was with Him."—*Gen.* xxxix. 2.

1. A help to holiness is to remember God's presence in our soul. The more vivid the remembrance the holier and more earnest our lives.

2. The example of Joseph in Egypt—in all his trials and temptations he never forgot "the Lord was with Him." We knowing God (through Christ) so well, should we not have a far keener remembrance?

3. Our fourfold encouragement; remembering
   - (*a*) God's goodness. "The Lord is good to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him" (Lam. iii. 25).
   - (*b*) The love of Christ for us.
   - (*c*) The promises of God that He will hear, help, and preserve us.
   - (*d*) The wisdom and power of God.

4. Our fault is to forget the Presence and protection of God, and to trust to ourselves.

"Short Sermons," i. 25; ii. 194.

II. Easter.

OUR HELPS—PRAYER.

"For Thou, my God, hast heard my prayer."—*Ps.* lx.6.

1. Prayer is the great means to help us to gain heaven. "The use of prayer is necessary for our salvation" (Council of Trent). Continued neglect of prayer can be a mortal sin.

2. What is prayer? The raising up of our minds and hearts to God. Our surroundings have such influence over us, that we should become utterly worldly, if prayer did not raise us up to our Father in heaven.

3. What is the power of prayer?

(*a*) It honours God and influences Him to listen to and grant our requests.

(*b*) It enlightens and strengthens our will to make a pure intention to seek only God's glory—to live for Him.

4. To judge by past prayers, we might doubt this, but tepidity, distractions, selfish aims have spoiled so many of our prayers.

"Short Sermons," i. 107.

III. Easter.

OUR HELPS—DAILY PRAYER.

"O woman, great is thy faith, be it done to thee as thou wilt."—*Matt.* xv. 28.

1. Prayer is impossible without grace, but this grace is never wanting, for God is only too anxious to grant it. Prayer is the daily bread of our soul to strengthen it to adhere to God and strive against sin.

2. *Intention* and *attention* required.

We cannot pray earnestly, if we have not an object to pray for. And however well we may begin, attention throughout is needed, lest distractions spoil our prayer.

3. The objects of our prayers: adoration; the oblation of ourselves; grateful thanks; invocation against dangers and temptations; an abiding sorrow for sin.

4. Perseverance in prayer. God sometimes delays the answer to teach us insistence and perseverance in prayer—*e.g.*, the woman of Canaan (the Text).

"The Light of Life," p. 92. "Short Sermons," ii. 66.

IV. Easter.

OUR HELPS—THE MOST HOLY NAME JESUS.

"If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that I will do."—*John* xiv. 14.

1. The power that prayer always had with God, even under the Old Law—*e.g.*, Moses (Exod. xxxii. 9-14).

2. How much more power the prayer "through Jesus Christ our Lord." The practice of the Church. The *promise* attached to prayer in the Name of Jesus.

3. But our prayers are not always answered, then what mistake do we make? We ask for many things that cannot be granted in that *Name*. "For all seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. ii. 21).

4. But every hope can be fulfilled if we pray for that which honours Jesus to grant. Not long prayer needed: the invocation "Jesus" can bring sorrow to our hearts; help to the cowardly; resignation to the afflicted, and mercy to the dying.

The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," pp. 80, 83. "Short Sermons," ii. 30.

V. Easter.

OUR HELPS—THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"Give me understanding and I will search Thy Law: and I will keep it with my whole heart."—*Ps.* cxviii. 34.

1. Left to ourselves, we are easily led by false maxims, enticed by the world, and fail repeatedly through instability of purpose.

2. But we receive at Confirmation and can receive again by prayer the Gifts of the Holy Spirit—Wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, and fortitude.

3. See the effects of these blessed helps in our soul:

(*a*) To set a right value on salvation and the means to it.
(*b*) To relish the things of God.
(*c*) Readiness of will to do the better thing.
(*d*) And through the gift of Fortitude to have the energy and courage to do our duty, and patience in sufferings and trials.

"The Catechist," ii. 310.

Sunday after the Ascension.

OUR HELPS—THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"And His mercy is . . . to them that fear Him."—*Luke* i. 50.

1. *Piety*, a gift of the Holy Spirit, is a child-like turning of the heart to God; by which we cling with faith and confidence to our Father and Redeemer, and through Him to our Mother Mary, etc.

2. Piety is a permanent endowment in the soul which should enable us to brave the world and its dangers, and cling to God. But this grace can remain dormant, and we have to rouse it to life by praying and frequent turning to God.

3. And the final gift is *Holy Fear*, which causes us to be

(*a*) Humble, lest we fall away.
(*b*) Vigilant against temptations and sinful occasions.
(*c*) Contrite, "my sin is always before me."
(*d*) And trustful in God's care for us.

"The Catechist," ii. 317. "The Christian Inheritance," p. 322.

Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."—*Gal.* v. 25.

1. That same Spirit of God, Who worked such wonders in the Apostles, has been given to us in Confirmation. Contrast ourselves with Peter and the rest filled with the Holy Ghost.

2. If we were led by the Spirit, as we should be, what faith and zeal and courage would characterize our lives.

3. Why is His blessed work thwarted ?

(*a*) Because we have not sincerely longed for Him to come and fill our hearts.

(*b*) Because we have "grieved" Him by our infidelities, self-seeking and cowardice.

(*c*) Because, alas ! He may have abandoned us, for the Spirit will not dwell in a body subject to sin.

4. Repair all this, by offering Him our undivided heart, and pray Him to come and be our Light, our Guide, our Comforter.

Trinity.

OUR HELPS—THE HOLY MASS.

"To the Lamb benediction and honour and glory and power for ever and ever."—*Apoc.* v. 13.

1. Of all our helps is not the Holy Mass the chief? God Himself cannot devise anything more sacred, more powerful, than the sacrifice of the Mass.

2. Mass is the Catholic's privilege! And love of it the test of his religion. How faithful were our forefathers, in spite of fines and imprisonment and even death! Have we the same steadfast clinging to the Holy Mass?

3. How efficacious and meritorious the Mass is we cannot comprehend; but at no other time, in no other way can we give God such honour, glory and thanksgiving; or so efficaciously supplicate His pardon and grace for ourselves.

4. How is it that men neglect Mass?

The *reason* is not the foolish excuse they may give, however varied.

It is—they are so entangled in sin that they are not free to go. "They are fast bound in the chains of their sins."

They must be contrite, wish to abandon sin, and beg for God's grace, lest, having lost their love of God, they may lose their hope and faith.

"Short Sermons," ii. 74.

II. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—FREQUENT COMMUNION.

"Abide in Me, and I in you."—*John* xv. 4.

1. We live under a Pope, Pius X., who has given a great impulse to frequent Communion. Obedience to the Church then and love of our Lord (for it is the hour of Communion that our Lord loves best) force us to change our lives, and to become frequent Communicants.

And is not this a *supreme help* to persevere ?

2. And yet, as in the Gospel, all try to find *excuses*.

(*a*) *Pride*—they are too taken up with things of their own that they have not time for God.

(*b*) *Avarice*—their minds are too engrossed in money-making. "The desire of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. vi. 10).

(*c*) *Sensuality and vice*—the Bread of Life has no attraction for such.

3. But our excuse—*unworthiness :* what of that ? A mere pretext. Will staying away ever make us *less unworthy ?* And did not the Master send out for the "poor, feeble, blind, lame" ? Come humbly like one of these.

4. What are we bound to do ? To accept God's gracious *help*, and approach often in obedience, confidence and love.

The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," pp. 289, 292. "Short Sermons," ii. 122.

III. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—THE SACRED HEART.

"My Son, give Me thy heart."—*Prov.* xxiii. 26.

1. The seat of religion is the heart. God is love, and the heart, the seat of love, must play the most important part in religion.

2. We have to give it *freely*—our love, affection, devotedness.

3. To whom? To Him, our good Saviour, Who first gave His own Heart to win ours. "A man's own heart must ever be given to win the heart of another."

4. The goodness of the heart is shown in deeds. So the kind words, merciful deeds, Sufferings and Death of our Lord reveal His Heart to us. And the daily Mass and Communion was the secret of that Heart all through life—and daily can teach us the love of His Heart.

5. Benefits of devotion to the Sacred Heart: More frequent Communions, the good example of others, and "*the morning offering*"—that pure Intention that supernaturalizes each day of our life.

"Short Sermons," i. 235; ii. 218.

IV. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—OUR MOTHER MARY.

"And the Virgin's name was Mary."—*Luke* i. 27.

1. We are assured of the love and the care of that Mother, who accepted us as children at the foot of the Cross. Our Lady's many titles—"Help of Christians," "Refuge of sinners," "Consoler of the afflicted," "Our life, our sweetness, and our hope,"—all are summed up in one word, her holy name *Mary*.

2. The mystery of its various meanings :—

(*a*) St. Jerome explains it "*Bitterness or Grief*." Symbol of her life,—the Mother of Sorrows.

(*b*) St. Bernard "*the Star of the Sea*," what Mary is to us in our trials and temptations.

(*c*) St. Peter Chrysologus "*Lady or Queen*." Mary in Heaven, Queen of Angels and of Saints.

3. Day by day let us learn and practise to invoke her now, and then how natural and easy at the hour of death, then will she help us in her threefold character.

"Short Sermons," ii. 222.

V. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—THE HAIL MARY.

"Hail, full of grace."—*Luke* i. 28.

1. Unceasingly, day after day and at every moment, the "Hail Mary" is on some poor sinner's lips.

2. An inspired prayer :—words of the Angel, of St. Elizabeth, and of the Church. Its motive to honour the Immaculate holiness of Mary, the Divine maternity of Mary, and her power and intercession.

3. Its use consecrated by the custom of the Church, reciting it so frequently in the Divine Office, the Angelus, the Rosary, morning and evening prayer, etc. A safeguard and a help to all who recite it regularly and devoutly.

4. Besides the honour it gives our Lady, we learn the intimate connection that we, in our frailty, have with Mary in her power. Sinners,—yet we are bidden to invoke her for help

(*a*) *Now*, the time of repentance, endeavour, patience.

(*b*) And at the hour of death,—the most dangerous, the most decisive moment on which eternity depends.

"The Catechist," i. 335.

VI. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—THE ROSARY.

"And all the multitude of the people was praying."—*Luke* i. 10.

1. The special blessing on the Rosary,—

   (*a*) The prayer of the multitude.

   (*b*) The prayer of obedience, enjoined by the Popes.

2. A perfect prayer: our *minds*, meditating on the mysteries: our *lips*, reciting the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary."

3. Who that knows and ponders over and learns to love these Mysteries can go wrong in his faith? Enumerate the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries.

4. A *bad* sign not to love the Rosary: a *worse* sign to be ashamed of it!

5. The world—godless, self-sufficient, cold-hearted—needed a remedy. The remedy is the Holy Rosary.

"Short Sermons," i. 256.

VII. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.

"I will praise thy name, for thou hast been to me a helper and a protector."—*From the Office of St. Joseph.*

1. God's doing that St. Joseph is *remembered ;* for who was he on earth ?

2. His titles : Spouse of Mary ; Foster-father of Jesus ; Protector of the Church.

3. The secrets of his holiness :

(*a*) Obedience to the Will of God.

(*b*) A pure intention—all for God's honour and glory.

(*c*) Union with Jesus and Mary, in life, in death.

4. Devotion to St. Joseph most useful and profitable, because God loves to hear his prayers to repay him for the poverty, anxiety, obedience and fidelity of Bethlehem and Nazareth.

By taking him as our model, and praying to him for help, we are joining God in honouring Him.

"Short Sermons," i. 227.

VIII. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—ST. MICHAEL AND THE ANGELS.

"At that time shall Michael rise up, the great Prince, who standeth for the children of Thy people."—*Dan.* xii. 1.

1. Angels unthought of by the world : forgotten even by so many Catholics.

2. Yet they are our defenders and guardians. "For He hath given His angels charge over thee : to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. xc. 11).

3. And why ? For God's honour and our salvation. And they are zealous in their help, because their fallen brethren are our enemies and would ruin us.

4. What then is our duty to them in return ?

(*a*) To *remember* their presence and reverence it. What a check in temptation ! What piety in prayer !

(*b*) To endeavour to fit ourselves to be their companions in heaven. Such is our destiny !

5. If we do this, they will be our safeguard and help in life and especially at death. (See the Ritual for Extreme Unction and the Burial Service for mention of Angels.)

"Short Sermons," i. 251 ; ii. 226.

IX. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—DEVOTION TO THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."—*Matt.* v. 7.

1. We should treasure everything in Religion that increases our love and kindliness, and what can do this better than devotion to the Souls in Purgatory?

2. Who are the souls in Purgatory? Why are they there? and what are their sufferings? (Explain.) And amongst them—friends, perhaps parents, etc.

3. We can help them by prayers, Masses, Communions, and good deeds.

4. And by helping them

(*a*) We sanctify ourselves, practising charity.
(*b*) We sin less—the thought of death and suffering hereafter deters us.
(*c*) We secure their help in life and death. In heaven they will not forget us.

The souls that St. Margaret of Cortona had relieved appeared at her death, waiting to bear her soul to heaven.

5. Yea, by this devotion, we honour the Saints and glorify God Himself.

The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," p. 458. "Short Sermons," i. 265.

X. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—FREQUENT CONFESSION.

"Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins."—*Ps.* l. 4.

1. The Sacrament of Penance is for the weak, the lukewarm and the frail. We all lack, when we wish to turn to God, a decisive, definite knowledge, fervour and strength. All this Confession supplies.

2. The *Examination* of conscience brings us ace to face with what is wrong : and constant examination forces us to notice many a lapse and negligence that had escaped us before, and shows us what we must do in future.

3. And the oftener we endeavour to be *contrite*, fervour is enkindled in our heart. The Passion, love of God, etc., grow upon us, and we become more earnest and our sorrow more intense.

4. And lastly the *Sacrament* helps our weakness, for it is intended to give strength to our resolve to amend. Absolution conveys to us the special grace of strenuous endeavour and perseverance in well-doing.

"Our Divine Saviour," p. 244. "Short Sermons," i 33

XI. Pentecost.

OUR HELPS—ABIDING SORROW.

"My sin is always before me."—*Ps.* l. 5.

1. Contrition is necessary in the life of every Christian; not only to *restore* the soul to grace, but to *preserve* it in grace. Nothing keeps from fresh sins like true, constant, abiding sorrow.

2. Hence the value, when in confession we have only slight sins of which to accuse ourselves, of mentioning some past graver sin, already confessed, for which we can not only be deeply sorry, but purpose never to commit again. "Be not without fear of sin forgiven." How easy to fall again.

3. Abiding sorrow also keeps us in memory of the sufferings of Christ, for our sins—our own sins—were the cause of those sufferings.

4. This abiding sorrow

(*a*) Fills us with humility.
(*b*) Urges us to make reparation.
(*c*) And to avoid even the least sins for the time to come.

"A Bishop and His Flock," p. 87. "Short Sermons," i. 65.

XII. Pentecost.

OUR LIFE IS A WARFARE.

"He that shall overcome . . . I will be his God: and he shall be My son."—*Apoc.* xxi. 7.

1. "Those who are leading a heavenly life on earth are of all the chief objects of the assaults of Satan" (Cat. C. Trent). The more we try to keep good, the severer the onslaught.

2. And why does God allow this?

(*a*) That we may know ourselves, our weakness, our proneness to sin, and therefore be humble.

(*b*) To make us manly and strive our best. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation" (Jas. i. 12).

3. We must not trust in ourselves, or we shall be deceived or overcome. The strength is from God; and this strength we can obtain by humble, earnest, constant prayer.

4. We must study our enemies and the dangers that threaten us;—our own self or wilfulness,—the devil, the world, and the flesh.

"Short Sermons," ii. 62, 194.

XIII. Pentecost.

OUR ENEMIES—SELF.

"The pride of life."—1 *John* ii. 16.

1. Self is that power, which dwells in every heart. The first sin of disobedience was the assertion of self;—self set up in God's place. From thence self was prone to evil.

2. Another name for self is Pride or Wilfulness, which is not one sin, but the mother of a whole brood of evils—the seven deadly sins.

3. Behold the family of deadly sins.

(*a*) Self looks at itself, and it is Pride.

(*b*) It looks at its neighbours, and it is envy, hypocrisy, malice, or uncharitableness.

(*c*) It looks at God, its Maker,—and becomes indifference, or presumption, or blasphemy, or disobedience, or unbelief.

4. Yet self, by the grace of God, can sacrifice itself, and take up the yoke and obedience of Christ. Pray God to convert this self within us—the greatest enemy to our salvation.

"Our Divine Saviour," p. 180.

XIV. Pentecost.

OUR ENEMIES—THE DEVIL.

"Satan hath desired to have you."—*Luke* xxii. 31.

1. The enemy of the Church and the souls of men—the devil. The instigator of evil; the seducer of mankind. It is a great mistake to undervalue an enemy.

2. So probe the depth of his *malice* and the reason of it. Out of hatred and spite to Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. Fear his *powers;* he is a spirit, his knowledge and experience; he knows no weariness, never relaxes in his attempt to ruin us.

4. His *craft;* he hides his hatred and malignity, lest we draw back in fear. He even makes men his tools, viz., those who scandalize, bad parents, and those who indulge in bad talk and spread the reading of bad books.

5. No compromise; no truce with this enemy. God is our power, if we invoke Him, and resist the evil one and keep from him.

"Short Sermons," i. 160, 41.

XV. Pentecost.

OUR ENEMIES—THE WORLD.

"Whosoever will be a friend of the world, becometh an enemy to God."—*Jas.* iv. 4.

1. What is meant by the world? The duties, pursuits, pleasures of everyday life. Not necessarily wrong in themselves; but they become wrong, if they stand *between* God, and the soul; and unutterably wrong, if they *usurp God's place* in the heart. And this is the spirit of the world.

2. The manner of the world's warfare,—
   (*a*) Open, by calumny and ridicule of holy things.
   (*b*) Secret, by seducing the soul, by some pleasure, companion or pursuit, at first seemingly innocent.

3. The example of the worldling (Matt. xix. 20, and Luke xviii. 21). "He was very rich . . . he went away sad." Our Lord could not win him over. The world gained the victory.

4. Two things we must do, lest "we love the world and the things that are in the world" (1 John ii. 15).
   (*a*) Watch over our heart; nothing but God must be *master* there.
   (*b*) Remember "the world passeth away" (1 John ii. 17). Religion is this, "To keep one's self unspotted from the world" (Jas. i. 27).

"Short Sermons," i. 151; ii. 90.

XVI. Pentecost.

OUR ENEMIES—THE FLESH.

"For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die."—*Rom.* viii. 13.

1. The enemy ever with us is our own self. We are made up of soul and body, spirit and flesh, and "these are contrary one to another."

Most of the lost have been ruined by sins of the flesh,—immodesty, impurity, nearly all of which sins are mortal.

2. The remedy against these temptations is to *flee* from them and *avoid* occasions. If this cannot be done, *instantly* invoke "Jesus and Mary." Prayer in such grievous temptations is obligatory under mortal sin.

3. Why should we fear these sins especially?

(*a*) Because of the dreadful punishments they incur. The Deluge, the destruction of Sodom, brought about by these sins (Gen. vi. 5-12, and xix. 24).

(*b*) Because of the difficulty, almost the impossibility of being rescued from their entanglements—*e.g.*, Lot's rescue (Gen. xix. 13).

4. Pray for holy fear; avoid occasions; pray instantly, lest "we may again be entangled and overcome" (2 Pet. ii. 20).

The Paulist "Five Minute Sermons," p. 385. "Short Sermons," i. 156.

XVII. Pentecost.

OUR DANGERS—BAD CONFESSIONS AND COMMUNIONS.

"Have not I chosen you twelve; and one of you is a devil?"—*John* vi. 71.

1. At the Last Supper, at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, amongst the twelve, who for the first time were privileged to receive the Body and Blood of Christ—one of them was in mortal sin.

2. Should not this fill us with fear and humility? Greed was the cause of the fall of Judas, but sins of impurity are the most frequent cause of bad confessions and Communions.

3. These sins, concealed through shame, or because we cling to a wicked companion, or because we cannot bring ourselves to break with sin and give up the occasion—lead the young and ignorant especially to make a bad confession.

4. Then Communion time comes! It might be noticed if they absented themselves: they might lose the good opinion of priest or friends: they have no excuse to plead:—and so, in guilt, fear and anguish their first bad Communion is made.

5. What a requital for our Lord's most generous love! Be afraid of committing the sin, not of owning it and confessing it.

"The Catechist," ii. 187.

XVIII. Pentecost.

OUR DANGERS—THE HABIT OF SIN.

"He, that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little."—*Ecclus.* xix. 1.

1. One great danger is not to fear sin as we should, and thus by degrees form a habit of sin. From one—a most common evil, and which brings so many other evils in its train,—we can learn how easily a habit is acquired, and its dreadful consequences.

2. Take drink. No one is a drunkard all at once. Some have a craving for it by heredity, and once indulged in, the craving soon becomes insatiable.

3. Others the craft of the devil leads to take, enjoy it, and finally become slaves to it. It may begin through company, good-fellowship, human respect, to appear a man!

4. Mother of every vice. Test it by the Commandments, drink breaks them all.

5. Though we may never have been tempted to it, be humble and afraid; resist the beginnings; draw back at once. The text.

"Short Sermons," i. 165.

XIX. Pentecost.

OUR DANGERS—RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SINS OF OTHERS.

"O Lord, from the sins of others spare thy servant." — *Ps.* xviii. 13.

1. Scandal is the *occasion* of another's sin, co-operation is *sin itself* with another, sometimes entailing the obligation of restitution.

2. We can *cause* others to sin
   (*a*) By counsel or advising.
   (*b*) By command.
   (*c*) By consent, allowing or yielding.
   (*d*) By provocation.
   (*e*) By praise or flattery.

3. We can *share* the guilt of others' sins.
   (*a*) By concealment,—hiding stolen goods, keeping watch whilst the evil is done, sheltering the criminal.
   (*b*) By being partner in the sin.
   (*c*) By silence, when bound to speak.
   (*d*) By defence of ill done, justifying or protecting.

4. How can those, who neglect to examine their conscience and very seldom go to confession, have any idea of the sins they may thus have to answer for at the Judgment?

"The Catechist," ii. 386.

XX. Pentecost.

OUR DANGERS: SINS OF OMISSION.

"The unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness."—*Matt.* xxv. 30.

1. Need ordinary good Catholics fear the Judgment? Yes, indeed, for then "hardly the just is secure."

2. For many the consternation will be caused by one class of sin. *The sins of omission!*

3. This is proved by the utterances of our Lord:

(*a*) The man with the one talent (Text). He was not a thief, what wrong had he done? He had *omitted* using the money to good advantage.

(*b*) The reasons our Lord gives for condemning the lost. No great crime is mentioned! No, such are already judged. But He says, "I was hungry and you gave me not to eat," etc.; "And these shall go into everlasting punishment."

4. Sins of omission—never thought of, therefore never repented of—are the dread surprises the devil has in store for our Judgment. Let us work diligently with God's grace lest we be "unprofitable servants."

"Short Sermons," ii. 210.

XXI. Pentecost.

OUR DANGERS—THE SINS AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

"The Holy Spirit shall not abide, when iniquity cometh in."—*Wisd.* i. 5.

1. A tepid and negligent life may lead to these most grievous sins. Sins of malice directly opposed to the Spirit of Love. They are Presumption, Despair, Resisting the known truth, Envy of another's spiritual good, Obstinacy in sin, and Final Impenitence.

2. The two first sin against Hope: the one rashly presuming on God's goodness in spite of a bad life; the other despair, which distrusts God's goodness and rejects the hope of pardon.

3. Resisting the known truth sins against Faith: refusing to accept the truth, when known; opposition to the doctrine and disdaining the claims of the Church.

4. The other three sin against charity, viz., envy, grief at our neighbour's goodness, censuring God's distribution of His gifts. Envy works dreadful evil in the soul.

Obstinacy in sin, presevering in a bad life, delaying conversion, despising God's grace.

Final impenitence, the closing act of such a life, dying at enmity with God. For this no forgiveness possible.

"The Catechist," ii. 378.

XXII. Pentecost.

OUR HOPES—FINAL PERSEVERANCE.

"He that perseveres to the end, he shall be saved." — *Matt.* x. 22.

1. Everything depends on perseverance. Only *natural* to grow weary in well-doing, to lose heart and give up the endeavour. Yes, but Perseverance is *supernatural*, a grace from God.

2. Three chief means to persevere :

(*a*) *Fidelity*, a daily practice of carefulness and exactitude.

(*b*) *Fervour*, a constant earnestness of the will. Love of our Lord and sorrow for sin sustain fervour : tepidity undermines it.

(*c*) *Daily prayer*, daily perseverance the reward of daily prayer.

3. Negligence *at* prayer and neglect *of* prayer cause the breakdown of perseverance.

4. We cannot obtain perseverance once and for all ! It is a *daily* endeavour, but the reward well worth the daily toil. "I will give thee the crown of life" (Apoc. ii. 10).

"Short Sermons," i. 219.

XXIII. Pentecost.

OUR HOPES: A HOLY DEATH.

"In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."—*Eccles.* vii. 40.

1. To secure a holy death we cannot take any chances, we must do what the Holy Spirit, the Saints, even common sense teach us. Remember it, prepare for it. It can only happen *once*.

2. A mistake to fear death and shun the thought of it. We only fear those things that deprive us of good or afflict us with evil.

3. What good does death deprive us of? This world—and has this world been so bright and happy, there is more sorrow than joy for most; and the world passeth away.

4. What evil does it afflict us with? None, death is only a gateway to the other life. It is *not death*, but *sin* we should fear. "The *sting* of death is *sin*" (1 Cor. vi. 56).

5. The advantages of remembering death. We should repent of the past: we should despise the world and its vanities: we should press on with renewed energy, loving and serving God, thus securing a Holy Death.

"Short Sermons," i. 203.

XXIV. Pentecost.

OUR HOPE: A FAVOURABLE JUDGMENT.

"O that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end."—*Deut.* xxxii. 29.

1. We shall all and each be brought to Judgment. Our one aim should be to obtain a favourable sentence.

2. The danger of condemnation is that

(*a*) Everything has to be settled and put right before death. Nothing can be rectified afterwards.

(*b*) At Judgment no excuses taken: every grace to be answered for: one sin — grievous and unrepented of—sufficient for condemnation.

3. Who is content with *his past* to merit heaven? Let us humbly acknowledge our shortcomings, not to repine, but to see where to improve.

4. *Provide* for Judgment *now!* Those in sin go to confession and communion, and begin a change of life: break with bad habits and avoid the occasions of sin; do not be content with tepid, cowardly lives,—but be wise and understand and provide for a favourable Judgment.

"Short Sermons," i. 5.

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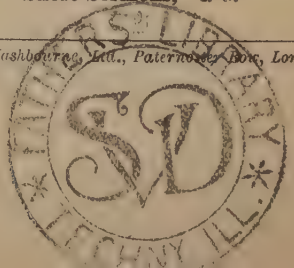

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